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SIDNEY HOMER, SONG COMPOSER

by

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Sidney Homer, in his autobiography, stated that it is not the amount of art America has produced which is the phenomenon but the amount of art that it has left unnoticed.¹ In a land as creatively energetic as America, perhaps the quantity of contemporary music makes it all too easy for us to forget the art of our immediate past. At any rate, much of our heritage of fine music has been forgotten.

Such seems to have been the case with the songs of Sidney Homer. The hundred-odd songs of this composer offer a vast wealth of material for study and performance by singers of today. Here in this storehouse of literature are songs of the most intense dramatic feeling, love songs of lyric beauty, art songs of rich harmonic color, children's songs of tenderness and charm, and light-hearted tunes of joy and gaiety. The artistic excellence of these songs makes them eminently suitable for any recital representative of the great masters of song writing. The tessitura is good, phrasing seems natural, and the accompaniments are sympathetic to the vocal requirements. The singer is offered opportunities

¹Sidney Homer, My Wife and I (New York: The MacMillan Company, 1939), p. 122.

for brilliant climaxes, sustained moods of lyric warmth, and moments of intense passion.

Yet most of these pieces lie forgotten and unperformed. "Sheep and Lambs" is still frequently performed, as is "Dearest" and "A Banjo Song." These, however, are hardly representative of the composer's best work. "Michael Robartes," with its dramatic impact, "The Sick Rose," with intensity and anticipation in every phrase, and "Mary's Baby," with profound warmth in its pentatonic melody, are but a few of the genuine works of art that have been too quickly forgotten by present day singers and teachers.

Perhaps, if there be a probing for an explanation or possible reason, one could look to the time in which Homer was publishing his works. While there were during this period bold experimenters in twentieth-century harmony, they were not to be found generally among song writers. Composers in the instrumental field were exploiting dissonance, modes, and atonality, to name only a few of the new harmonic techniques. American song writers, however, during the years of the early twentieth century, were generally more traditional in their use of tonal resources. Pleasant tunes, rather than songs which could be labeled true art songs seemed to be what composers were publishing and singers were performing.

Homer, thoroughly trained in the German tradition, and being a pianist and theorist, was perhaps somewhat ahead of his colleagues in the song composing field. Married to

one of the greatest singers America has produced, he quite naturally turned to the art song as the vehicle for his creative output, but he used a harmonic vocabulary which was possibly more familiar to instrumental composers than to contemporary American song writers. Herein perhaps lies his strength as an enduring composer and his weakness as an abiding contemporary favorite.

His harmonic vocabulary is inventive and extensive, but the happy fact is that he also knew how to sing a song, for his melodies are, in turn, capricious, charming, lyric, boldly dramatic, wistful, and poignant. He explored the full range of human emotions, and sang of them sometimes boldly, sometimes quietly, but always beautifully. As Homer himself said, a song is sometimes as potent as a symphony.¹ Even a brief acquaintance with his songs confirms the fact that he knew well how to use this potent form of music.

It is the purpose of this study to stimulate a greater appreciation and awareness of the compositions of Homer, and it is to be hoped that in the never-ending search for satisfactory material for studio and concert use, his songs will be explored, studied, and performed, and will take their place along with the other of America's most important art songs.

¹Ibid., p. 29.

CHAPTER II

BIOGRAPHY

Died: Sidney Homer, 88, musician, composer, and husband of the late opera star, Louise Homer, in Winter Park, Florida, July 10.¹

Such was the epitaph acknowledging the passing of a distinguished and prolific American song composer. Most singers today, however, are acquainted with only a few of his many excellent compositions. Yet a prominent author, Rupert Hughes, wrote that Sidney Homer was " . . . a composer whose songs sometimes show a most tremendous strength and unusual originality," and that " . . . some of his compositions seem inimitable, and the hearer unconsciously thinks, as with works of genius, 'I could never have done that.'"² The publishing house of G. Schirmer, which published over a hundred of Homer's songs during his lifetime, still lists a half dozen of his best known songs in its current catalogue. In recognition of his work as a song composer, the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia conferred upon him the honorary degree of Doctor of Music in 1943,³ as did Rollins

¹Newsweek, July 20, 1953, p. 64.

²Rupert Hughes, Composers in America (Boston: L. C. Page, 1914), p. 375.

³New York Times, July 11, 1953, p. 11

College, in Winter Park, Florida, in 1939.¹ The apparent lack of present day interest in Homer's music is indeed curiously inconsistent with the high regard shown him by many of his contemporaries.

It is perhaps both fortunate and unfortunate that Homer's fame today rests more on the fact that he was the husband of Louise Homer, the famous Metropolitan Opera contralto, than on the evidence of his published works. As is revealed throughout his autobiography, My Wife and I, much of his time and energy was devoted to the furthering of her career. His daughter, Hester Homer Henry, wrote that he was the mainstay of his wife's career.² A study of his songs, however, reveals that he was also a composer of music of the highest quality and utmost integrity. A study of his life reveals this same integrity and devotion to the highest ideals.

Sidney Homer was the son of Anna Marie Swift and George Homer. They were both deaf mutes. His father was born in 1811, the son of Joseph Warren Homer and Sally Rea Homer. When George Homer was ten years old, he gradually lost his hearing. He retained the ability to talk, however, and after being educated as a deaf mute, worked first in a United States Customhouse, and then in the Post Office. Homer wrote affectionately of his father in his autobiography:

¹Hamilton Holt, President, Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida, Address on the occasion of the Honorary Degree Citation for Sidney Homer, March 1, 1939.

²Letter from Hester Homer Henry, Hague, New York, August 8, 1962.

My father had the finest character I have ever known. His life was entirely at the service of others. If he had any personal desires I never knew it. His interests seemed to be wholly outside himself. His was the happiest nature one could imagine and the sunniest.¹

There is no evidence of any particular musical talent in his father's family except for one early musician, Daniel Rea.

There had been a distinguished amateur musician in the family in the preceding generation. Daniel Rea was the best singer of his day, and was the first in America to sing the tenor arias from the Handel oratorios. He sang the Welcoming Ode when Washington made his famous visit to Boston in 1791.²

Sidney Homer's mother, Anna Marie Swift Homer, was the daughter of John Dean Swift, who came from Virginia. Her mother was from an old Dutch family bearing the surname of Hun. Left totally deaf by a severe attack of scarlet fever when she was three years old, she, nonetheless, retained a vitality and enthusiasm for life. Homer wrote: "She was one of those magnetic, dynamic souls that make life interesting, not only for themselves, but for others."³ Perhaps her son's great talent for music was inherited from her, for in My Wife and I, Homer wrote:

The truth is that she was naturally musical. Her sense of rhythm was perfect. While at school she had been taught to dance, and the climax of all children's parties came when we induced her to do the national dances of different countries for our little guests.⁴

¹Homer, op. cit., p. 5.

²Ibid., p. 7.

³Ibid., p. 1

⁴Ibid., p. 9.

This same sensitivity to music was recorded by her son in another passage:

When I was forming my classes in Boston, she went with me every Saturday night to the Boston Symphony concerts. Every nuance of the conductor's baton and the bowing of the string players, and also, the vibrations, to which she was particularly sensitive, held her spellbound. She would sit motionless for two hours, her eyes glued on the orchestra, an enraptured expression on her face. It was very moving. Some folks are musical, some are not, and nothing can change either sort.¹

She was obviously a woman of great integrity and character and left her son much more than a musical talent. He wrote of her:

My mother, by example and precept, taught me that the world was a fascinating place in which to live, that love played a great part in it, that humanity could be trusted, . . . that courage and a determination to make the most of oneself would always meet with recognition and opportunity, that boredom and a fear of the commonplace led to distortion and artificiality.²

Sidney Homer was the second son of the family. George, born in 1856, died at the age of three. Georgianna, a daughter, was born later. In 1864 Sidney Homer was born. The great question was, of course, whether or not he could hear.

More suspense! Yes, I had good, big ears, and could hear wonderfully! All our relatives rejoiced over these children who could hear, and each member wanted to be the one who taught us to talk. It was rather trying. But the language of parents comes first, and I know I could talk in the sign language before I could speak.³

The childhood of the Homer children was a happy one. Growing up in a family that was of necessity interdependent

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 1

³Ibid., p. 6.

produced a feeling of closeness which was perhaps deeper than in most families. The parents' attitude of respect toward, and confidence in their children was described by Homer as " . . . an unspeakable blessing to us all."¹

Homer received his early education in the public schools of Boston. He attended the Rice Elementary School and the Boston Latin School. The Latin School's records list his entrance on September 2, 1879.² After one year's attendance, he entered Phillips Academy in Andover, Massachusetts. Here he took an active part in campus life and was elected vice-president of his class for the winter term of the 1880-1881 academic year. He joined the Philomatheon Society, a debating society which still exists at the college. He also played the banjo in the "Phillips Spanish Students," a group of five musicians, two playing guitars and three playing banjos.³ Although many other musical groups were active on the campus, extant records indicate that he did not take part in any of them.

This apparent apathy toward the musical life of the college is perhaps explained by his rather meager acquaintance with music at this time. His sister had studied the piano, and he had learned a little from her, but evidently he had received no formal musical education. It was litera-

¹Ibid., p. 8.

²Letter from Max Levine, Alumni Secretary, Boston Latin School, Boston, Massachusetts, September 15, 1962.

³Letter from Mrs. Waters Kellogg, Associate Archivist, Phillips Academy, Andover, Massachusetts, October 9, 1962.

ture, rather than music, that seemed to be the great passion of his early years.

His sister was the inspiration for this interest in literature. He wrote, "She became a great reader and I followed suit."¹ He was familiar with the works of great authors and poets at an early age. Thorpe wrote that " . . . his early passions were English poetry and the works of Dickens and Thackeray."² This love of good literature was to play a significant part in his later career as a song composer, for, in seeking texts for his musical settings, he instinctively chose the works of recognized poets. "He was a pioneer in this respect, turning to literature for song texts in a period when sentimental rhymes were quite the rage."³

Out of his extensive reading sprang a desire to visit London, the home of so many of his idols, and at the age of sixteen he was able to realize his childhood dream.⁴

The year 1881 found him in London where he spent the days hunting out the places which, up to this time, he had known only from books. It was here in London that he also became aware of music as one of the great arts, and he described it as " . . . a strange, exotic land, a far-away world where no common American boy could expect to live and breathe."⁵

¹Homer, op. cit., p. 10.

²Harry Colin Thorpe, "The Songs of Sidney Homer," Musical Quarterly, XVII (January, 1931), 55.

³Ibid., p. 58.

⁴Ibid., p. 55.

⁵Homer, op. cit., p. 16.

Among those in the metropolis who became friendly with the young American was a Mr. Green, music critic of the London Daily News, who discerned the budding gift.¹

This man was to have a tremendous influence on the young boy's future. Homer described the manner in which Mr. Green's great interest in him developed:

There was a piano in the dining room, and as the room was empty in the afternoon he began playing for me. He grew more and more interested and gave more and more time to it. . . . After several weeks he took possession of the situation, I must study music. I should go straight to Leipzig where he had studied. I should give my life to music, it was my sacred duty, I was born for that and nothing else!²

Homer wrote of his hesitation in even considering this enthusiastic directive, for he considered himself too old to begin such a study: "I should always be handicapped by the time I had lost."³ The ultimate result of his late start to his career as an American song composer, however, was, according to Thorpe, an asset rather than otherwise. Thorpe contended that " . . . by the time he took up the professional study of music, the Anglo-American cast had been imparted to his mind so definitely that its influence remained."⁴

So the young Homer decided to act upon Green's advice, and in the fall of 1881 went to Germany, " . . . to look

¹Thorpe, op. cit., p. 55.

²Homer, op. cit., p. 16.

³Ibid., p. 18.

⁴Thorpe, op. cit., p. 70.

into this thing called music."¹ The remainder of that year was spent getting acquainted with the musical life of Leipzig. Thorpe described this period:

The Boston youth hurled himself into a musical atmosphere created largely by the Gewandhaus Orchestra under Reinecke, the opera under Anton Seidl, and the choir of Thomaskirche, where Bach was performed regularly.²

In 1882, Homer began his formal music studies with Carl Hauser. He worked enthusiastically and diligently.

I worked on merrily for four months. Harmony was very easy and logical, and seemed to be merely a matter of good taste. Piano was difficult. My clumsy hands, gnarled and thickened from baseball and rowing, were obstinate. But at last they showed signs of yielding to the hours of practice, and Carl Hauser looked pleased and encouraged.³

It was during this period that Homer first became interested in the song as an art form. He described the occasion in his autobiography:

I heard my first song recital. The great Lieder singer, Herr Gustav Walter, came from Vienna and gave a Schubert evening. . . . We were transported. . . . From that evening, song had a new and infinite meaning.⁴

He was impressed by the power of this form of musical composition. He became convinced that it was " . . . just as potent as a symphony or a music drama."⁵

His studies in Leipzig were interrupted in 1883, when he suffered a severe attack of shingles. He returned to Bos-

¹Homer, op. cit., p. 20.

²Thorpe, op. cit., p. 55.

³Homer, op. cit., p. 30.

⁴Ibid., p. 29.

⁵Ibid.

ton, having been advised by a German physician to give up the study of music. Although his self-confidence was shaken, he decided to return to his music studies, and when he had fully recovered from his illness, he started studying with George Chadwick, the eminent New England organist-composer. Chadwick instructed him in both of his fields of specialization, and helped him prepare for entrance in Rheinberger's class at the Royal School of Music in Munich, Germany. To George Chadwick, Homer credits his decision to make music his life work. He wrote:

Music is an easy study under a great master, and by summer I was firmly on my feet. . . . What a change! The confidence and assurance given me by one man, to whom music was an art, not merely technique.¹

He was admitted to the Royal School of Music the following year, and remained under Rheinberger's guidance for the next three years. An interesting description of Rheinberger's class is found in My Wife and I:

Rheinberger's class was simply a place where beautiful counterpoint was written. No homework was assigned. . . . All original work done by a student was self-imposed. What he wrote at home was read in silence in the class by Rheinberger and was never heard by his twenty classmates. . . . In that silence the most exquisite counterpoint was written on the board either by Rheinberger or by one of the students. The tension was tremendous, and after two hours we were exhausted.²

To Homer, this class was " . . . typical of the real world of music, in which everyone waits anxiously for the next beautiful work, and cherishes, zealously, every beauti-

¹Ibid., p. 33.

²Ibid., p. 34.

ful work ever written."¹ There was no impatience for publication and ensuing fame among these students. Many members of this class, however, did achieve distinction in the musical world:

Berwald at Syracuse University; Louis Victor Saar at Cincinnati; George Hamer at Lawrence; Pommer in Philadelphia; Cajani, the great pianist, in Florence, Italy; Howard Pierce, an equally great pianist in Dayton, Ohio; and Otto Singer as a world-famous musician.²

In 1888, Homer returned to New Bedford, Massachusetts, where his parents were living. Although he had intended to return to his studies the following term, he decided to remain at home when he found that his father's heart condition was more serious than he had previously believed it to be. He organized a class in harmony in New Bedford and remained there until his father's death.

Finding New Bedford " . . . too limited a field,"³ he moved to Boston where, from " . . . 1888-1895 he taught harmony and counterpoint, . . . lecturing also on symphonies and the Wagnerian dramas."⁴ His classes grew and he became well-known throughout the eastern part of the United States.

That he was recognized as a sound theorist and an accomplished teacher was evident by the offers made to him

¹Ibid., p. 34.

²Ibid., p. 39.

³Ibid., p. 41.

⁴Richard Aldrich, "Homer, Sidney," Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians, ed. Eric Blom (5th ed.; New York: St. Martin's Press, Inc., 1959), IV, 342.

by established schools of music.

Dr. Anagnos asked me to take the music department of the Perkins Institute for the Blind, and another school made a similar offer, but this would mean giving up my fine class and I couldn't do that.¹

Into the quiet, academic life of Sidney Homer came, in September, 1893, a young girl, Louise Dilworth Beatty, who " . . . wanted to learn 'all about music.'"² Louise Beatty was described by Homer as having a " . . . little, Irish, turned-up nose, and a Scotch way of doing business."³ He accepted her as a student; but she was to become much more than this to him. He told of his quickening interest in this young student:

On Sundays I used to go to hear my pupil sing. She had a good voice, and after a while I felt it my duty to coach her on some songs. Almost everyone feels it to be his duty to coach a singer, and I was no exception. Of course I made no charge for this although it took more and more of my time.⁴

He described her voice as having a " . . . haunting quality; . . . it was low but it had the sparkle and brilliance of a great dramatic soprano."⁵ It made him want to write songs. Seeking English translations of German songs for this pupil who knew no foreign language, he " . . . began to understand that there was a vast field for song writing

¹Homer, op. cit., p. 49.

²Ibid., p. 44.

³Ibid., p. 45.

⁴Ibid., p. 46.

⁵Ibid.

in English and American poetry."¹ Thus his growing interest in the field of song composition was given new impetus by his growing love for the girl who was to become his wife and also one of America's greatest singers.

On January 9, 1895, Sidney Homer and Louise Beatty were married. In November their first daughter, Louise, was born. Homer continued teaching, and his wife did local church and concert work. In his autobiography, Homer wrote: "It seemed beyond belief that so much happiness could come into the lives of two people."²

The little family appeared settled and content. Louise Homer, however, had a superb contralto voice, and Sidney Homer's mother had taught him that " . . . courage and determination to make the most of oneself would always meet with recognition and opportunity."³ In 1896, a decision was made:

Then I announced my great plan. If she would borrow some money from her friends in Pittsburgh, I would borrow from my relatives in Boston. We would finish the season with my class and her church, and then go to Paris for two years. I had had five years in Germany, and she ought to have two years with the great masters in Paris.⁴

The Homers gave little thought to the outcome of such a venture.

We had no illusions and aspired to nothing but two years

¹Ibid.

²Ibid., p. 50.

³Ibid., p. 1

⁴Ibid., p. 51.

of study. The fond expectation of operatic success, of fame, fortune, idolatry, which haunts the minds of so many singers, is nothing less than a tragedy. . . . My wife had none of this silly nonsense. Sufficient to the day was the work thereof.¹

They settled in Paris, and for the next two years Homer devoted his energies to helping his wife in her voice studies. Satisfied that she was progressing satisfactorily, he did some composing but made no attempt to publish any of his compositions. His wife's career was uppermost in importance. She became quite well-known in France, even while studying, and in 1897, Homer, having read that the director of the Metropolitan Opera was in town, made a decision that was to decide the direction of her career:

In November just six weeks after those lessons began [with a third teacher, Fidele Koenig], I read in the Paris edition of the New York Herald that Mr. Maurice Grau (manager of the Metropolitan Opera House) was in town. . . . Suddenly I thought, "Why shouldn't he hear my wife sing?"²

An audition was arranged, and Mr. Grau, after hearing Louise Homer sing, was obviously favorably impressed by her voice, for he told them that " . . . she must have at least one year's experience in a provincial opera house; the conditions would not be very pleasant, but it was necessary to go through with it; he never took debutantes at the Metropolitan; she should not, in any case, sign one of the five-year contracts which the Paris Opera insisted on."³

¹Ibid., p. 53.

²Ibid., p. 63.

³Ibid., p. 64.

Following the advice of Grau, Louise Homer, in June, 1898, began a three months' season with the summer opera at Vichy. Thus began the career of one of the most beloved singers America has produced. A season at Covent Garden in London followed, and then the contract from the Metropolitan was extended. For nineteen years she was the leading dramatic contralto at the Metropolitan, singing every season.

Louise Homer was one of the foremost singers of her time. She was also recognized as a great personality, being described on one occasion as being " . . . greater than her own brilliant career."¹ In 1947, when Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida, conferred upon her the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Award, the president of the college paid the following tribute:

We think of you in this moment not as the artist whose glorious voice and vivid dramatic sense placed all lovers of music in her everlasting debt, but also as a woman whose nobility of spirit shines bright among all the honors a grateful world has given. In 1910 the New York Times, reviewing your performance of Orpheus, said that your face was "illuminated with a beauty that comes from the soul." That beauty you have carried with you everywhere. It has touched with light a singularly beautiful marriage. . . . It shines in the life of our beloved Sidney Homer, and in the lives of your children. It has brought comfort and strength to all who have lived in the warmth of your presence, and especially to those young singers at Rollins whom you have guided as much by the example of your spirit as by the perfection of your art. . . .²

¹William T. Ellis, "Fifty Golden Years," January, 1945, Homer File, Archives, Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida.

²Hamilton Holt, President, Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida, Presentation Address for the Sullivan Medalion, February 24, 1947.

The career of Louise Homer was due in no small part to the courage and devotion of her husband. Part of her greatness was his greatness. When he took her to Paris, he seemed to have no regrets for his career as teacher and lecturer that he was leaving in Boston. After his wife's debut, he wrote:

We went home--my wife just a piece in the operatic picture puzzle which had to be put together over and over again, and I just a helper, the husband of a singer. We were happy and humble; proud that she had gotten through so successfully, and very conscious of the greatness of the art and the infinite distance that lay ahead of us.¹

He told in his autobiography of his uneasy feeling at being the husband of a successful singer, " . . . as any American would."² But he concluded that " . . . the whole thing was grand and worth any sacrifice and any inward struggles with pride."³

Sidney Homer was, however, much more than the husband of a successful singer, and as his career in song composing progressed, his wife became, in turn, his helper. In the years when her career was at its height, she brought many of her husband's songs to the attention of the public by her performances of them in concert. Samuel Barber, noted composer and nephew of Louise Homer, wrote:

From childhood on, at Lake George and in New York, I have heard Mrs. Homer sing these songs. She always used

¹Homer, op. cit., p. 78.

²Ibid., p. 82.

³Ibid.

a group of them at every concert, and she did not give them a place only at the end of her programs, which is the common destiny of most American songs, brought up at the rear, like after-dinner mints, for an audience whose best attention has already been given elsewhere.¹

Thus the careers of these two musicians were intertwined, and each was perhaps greater because of the help of the other. Their daughter, Hester Homer Henry, wrote, "Bear in mind that while he was the main-stay of Mother's career, she was the main-stay of him, and her strength and love sustained us all."² It was said of them in 1945, on the occasion of their golden wedding anniversary, that they gave their lives professionally to music and personally to their children, grandchildren, and above all to each other.³

Homer's career as a song composer really began while his wife was studying in Paris, although he had done some composing previously. He explained, " . . . for I was a composer now, whether I wanted to be or not; I must justify my existence."⁴ Antonin Savard, the French composer, had heard some of Homer's songs soon after the Homers arrived in Paris, and gave him much encouragement. His work first came to the attention of a publisher in 1899, when he and his wife were in London for Madame Homer's appearance at

¹Samuel Barber, Preface to Seventeen Songs by Sidney Homer (New York: G. Schirmer, Inc., 1943).

²See p. 2.

³Hamilton Holt, President, Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida, Address delivered at the Golden Wedding Anniversary of Sidney and Louise Homer, January 9, 1945.

⁴Homer, op. cit., p. 55.

Covent Garden.

Just before the season closed the London agent for B. Schott's Söhne heard some of my songs. He was much interested and wanted Dr. Strecker, the head of the house of Mainz, to hear them.¹

An audition was arranged during the summer of 1899, and Louise Homer sang some of her husband's songs. Dr. Strecker offered to publish all of his songs, with both German and English texts, paying a cash price without royalty. Although Homer regarded it as a fine offer, he hesitated, explaining, "I thought an American publisher would be in closer contact with the only public I could hope to reach, and I did not like to sell the songs outright."²

He declined the offer, but wrote that it gave him the needed encouragement to go on. He made no further attempts at publication until he and his wife returned to New York, she to fulfill her contract with the Metropolitan. After settling in New York, he decided to attempt to interest an American publisher in his songs. By this time he had been composing for many years. Hall wrote of this belated decision:

That he was not anxious about rushing into print is evident from his delightful account in My Wife and I, where he tells how he bundled up a few songs and explained to the publisher that he had written songs for a number of years (seventeen in all) and wished Mr. G. Schirmer to hear some of them.³

¹Ibid., p. 94.

²Ibid., p. 96.

³James Husst Hall, The Art Song (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1953), p. 269.

His wife sang an impromptu musicale and as a result, Mr. Schirmer offered to publish his songs, and selected eight settings of Tennyson poems for a beginning. The contract he offered had the royalty clause which had been missing from the one proffered by the B. Schott House. Homer signed this contract, and wrote that he felt both exultation and humility:

It seemed too good to be true. In a few minutes I had changed from a composer working in the dark into one with a publisher and a public. It would be foolish to pretend that I had always known this would happen. I had not. Every man who writes knows he may never reach a publisher. . . . Gustave Schirmer and Rudolph Schirmer, who followed him as president of the company, were two of life's noblemen.¹

Thus Sidney Homer's songs were introduced to the public, and with them, Homer himself. Thorpe wrote:

And since a creator reveals himself in his creations, it is likely that, as we study the songs of Sidney Homer, the self of their author will emerge before us, itself the final and authentic explication of his art, . . . for in natures like Homer's, there is not the usual duality of man and artist; there is integrity, the man and the artist being one.²

If this be true, one of the first conclusions about the man might well be that he was interested in all people in all walks of life. His daughter, Hester Homer Henry, writing of her father, confirmed this, stating, "His great love of people--all people--and interest in them never flagged."³ Titles of his songs reveal this wide interest. Such contrasting poems for musical settings as "Casey at the Bat,"

¹Homer, op. cit., p. 120.

²Thorpe, op. cit., p. 48.

³Letter from Hester Homer Henry.

"Requiem," "An Idaho Ball," "General William Booth Enters Into Heaven," "Mary's Baby," and "The Fiddler of Dooney," might seem strange choices for the pen of but one composer. Yet perhaps such seemingly incongruous song texts demonstrate indeed that their composer was a man not afraid to reveal himself in any mood. Thorpe said of Homer:

He sees that the psyche is not a god with two faces only, but a multi-visaged being; he realizes that the gay mood is Homer, the devout mood is Homer, the sophisticated mood is Homer, the passionate mood is Homer, the aspiring mood is Homer. With Emerson he "writes upon the lintels of the doorpost, 'whim,' giving himself over to the spontaneous uprush of impressions and ideas, finding himself whole while multifarious; one, yet many."¹

In spite of this seemingly whimsical choice of song texts, the music of Homer always remained true to the mood of the text, and in good taste. It was said that " . . . a wholesome sanity pervades even the intense moments of his music."² This same sanity and integrity was to be found in the personality and character of the composer.

The infinite variety of Homer's chosen texts gives an indication of the wide variety of musical settings which were necessary for his songs. He seemed to move easily from starkly dramatic forms, such as he used in "How's My Boy?" and "Song of the Shirt," to gay, folk-like melodies, such as are found in "A Banjo Song," and the "Mother Goose Songs." He did not seem to be overly influenced by popular tendencies or prevailing movements in music. He was described as being

¹Thorpe, op. cit., p. 49.

²Ibid., p. 70.

" . . . perfectly content to occupy his own skin, artistically speaking, accepting his own emotions for better or for worse as the sole source of his inspiration."¹ Perhaps the price of this musical integrity was rather high. Some of his simpler songs, such as "A Banjo Song," became very popular. Because of this popularity and the inevitable identification of these simpler songs with their composer, many of his more sensitive, finely-wrought compositions have been overlooked. Nevertheless, Homer felt there was a need for these simple tunes, and continued to have them published. That he was aware of the commonplace character of some of his songs is evident by his amusing account of the reaction of his wife to his settings of Howard Weeden's Bandanna

Ballads:

I set three of the little poems to music and took them home to show my wife at lunch. I knew she would laugh to see how I had (for the moment, of course) fallen off my high horse. She liked them! . . . I think I was a little crestfallen that she didn't realize I had stepped down from my pedestal.²

On another occasion he showed a copy of "A Banjo Song" to Kurt Schindler, and asked him if he thought it would ruin his reputation. "He wanted to spare my feelings, but he had to say he thought it would."³ Homer himself described the song as a "little cheap and a little dressy."⁴ Neverthe-

¹Ibid., p. 47.

²Homer, op. cit., p. 193.

³Ibid., p. 204.

⁴Ibid.

less, he had it and the other Bandanna Ballads published, and said he was " . . . glad [he] wrote these songs."¹ He recognized that perhaps his talent lay in simplicity, and that there was a need for writing of this kind:

The high brow attitude, so natural to musicians who have lived in the atmosphere of the works of great composers can be very deceptive. We are lifted to a high plane, but we may not be able to work there. We may have a talent for simpler things.²

Thus the honesty, even in self-evaluation, of Homer is again revealed.

Homer himself, however, regarded his heavy, dramatic songs as his most important works. Having studied in Germany, he wrote in the great German tradition, and such works as "Song of the Shirt," "Prospice," "There's Heaven Above," and "The Pauper's Drive" reflect this training and his evaluation of the German school as representing the highest tradition of song composition.³ He, in fact, planned to return to Germany to study with Brahms when his father's death caused him to decide to remain in Boston and send his mother and sister abroad instead.⁴

Homer's songs were recognized as genuine art pieces by many great musicians. One of his songs, "The Song of the Shirt," was given an orchestral setting by Frederick Stock

¹Ibid., p. 193.

²Ibid.

³Sidney Homer, Jr., emphasizes this in a letter to the author, March 18, 1963.

⁴Letter from Katharine Homer Fryer, New York, New York, March 29, 1963.

and was performed by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra with Karl Muck conducting. "On this occasion, Dr. Muck said to him, 'I am glad to meet a man who has something new to say.'¹ On another occasion, Toscani was so impressed by the song, "To Russia," that he requested Mme. Homer to sing it " . . . three times running without pause."² Samuel Barber, well-known contemporary composer, wrote recently that " . . . I am as much an admirer of Mr. Homer's songs as ever."³ These incidents and comments would seem to confirm that there was depth and genuine art in all of Homer's works.

Homer's output of songs was impressive. Though he was often ill, and was forced to guard his health carefully throughout his lifetime, he composed for publication over a hundred songs during the years when his wife's career was at its height. This seems all the more astonishing when one considers that, when not ill, he attended every rehearsal and every performance of the operas in which his wife sang roles. His composing was done in vacation cottages, in hotels, in parlors converted into studios, and in rented homes. He composed rapidly, yet the quality of his work never suffered. He wrote:

Usually songs make themselves in a very short time. Be

¹Ibid., p. 135.

²Ibid.

³Letter from Samuel Barber, Mount Kisco, New York, September 19, 1962.

they good, bad, or indifferent, they have a defiant air of inevitability and seem to say, "Touch me if you dare!" Tinkering is usually a poor business, and a song writer is seldom in the same mood a second time.¹

Difficulties did appear, however, with some texts.

Hall relates how queer some material appeared to Homer,

. . . who finds it now and again angular, stiff, heavy, long-worded, stretched beyond the musical phrase, interrupted with parentheses. I should be ashamed to tell how many big things I started. I loved them but they didn't love music. They would not "make themselves," and unless a song makes itself, the game is up.²

Homer, though a successful composer, never lost the feeling of humility and gratitude for his own good fortune in finding a publisher for his songs. In his autobiography he expressed his concern for the failure of America to recognize its own young artists. He wrote, "It is not the amount of art it produces, but the amount of art it fails to discover and cherish, that is the amazing phenomenon in America."³ He was ever in sympathy with young musicians and artists struggling for recognition, and toward this end he and his wife gave much time and effort. He was a member of ASCAP and enjoyed the protection the organization affords its members in the use of copyrighted music, but expressed the wish that such protection could be extended to cover performance rights. He wished that some sort of tax could be placed on concert tickets, the proceeds from which might be

¹Homer, op. cit., p. 135.

²Hall, op. cit., p. 269.

³Homer, op. cit., p. 122.

divided among the living composers represented on the program. He felt that such a plan would encourage young composers and would provide a greater stimulus to creative art in America. He deplored the practice of private patronage. "Time to work is needed, but time earned, not time given, is what men want."¹

By 1919, Homer's songs were well-known, and performed quite extensively. This was the year that his wife, Louise Homer, sang her last season with the Metropolitan Opera. After finishing the season, it was decided that she should devote her talents entirely to the concert field, and for the next nine years, she concertized extensively, " . . . one group on her . . . programs always being her husband's songs."² During the years 1920 to 1928, two of the Homer children, who were also beginning careers in music, appeared with their mother professionally. Katharine, a pianist, served as her mother's accompanist from 1927 to 1931, touring with her for three seasons.³ Her proud father wrote of her work:

She played the songs beautifully. She had a dramatic sense which enabled her to give a special color to each number. . . . There seemed to be an unusually subtle understanding between them which the audiences were quick to see and appreciate.⁴

¹Ibid., p. 214.

²"Mme. Homer, Singer and Mother," Woman Citizen, June 13, 1921, p. 24.

³Letter from Katharine Homer Fryer, March 29, 1963.

⁴Homer, op. cit., p. 253.

Louise, the eldest daughter, also joined her mother on occasion during these years, and this young soprano and Mme. Homer presented joint concerts with great success. They also made some recordings for the Victor Company during these years. A newspaper review of one of their concerts made comment:

As to the young woman's voice, it is the voice of her mother, as nearly as a soprano may resemble a contralto, just as Miss Homer herself in many ways is "her mother all over again."¹

In 1928, because of the illness of her husband, Mme. Homer decided to give up all her professional appearances. Double pneumonia, double pleurisy, and a developing abscess in the lungs had severely taxed his already frail health, and the doctors ordered a warmer climate. The Homers moved to Palm Beach, Florida, and, for a time, Mme. Homer attempted to fulfill engagements over the country, but when the strain became too great, she cancelled her contracts. In the year and a half in which Homer was recovering, he wrote his autobiography, My Wife and I, published by MacMillan Company in 1939. It was described by B. Meredith Cadman as " . . . the sweet, warm, responsive story of the life of Louise Homer, beloved American contralto, and her devoted husband, Sidney Homer, well-known composer."²

Some critics will term it "domestic"; and thank fortune, it is. Its theme of love, mutual respect, and

¹Ibid., p. 232.

²B. Meredith Cadman, Review of My Wife and I, by Sidney Homer, Etude, (June, 1939), 374.

family pride of attainment is refreshing. . . . Here is a book of rare charm for any reader.¹

Mrs. Richard Sias, studio accompanist for Mme. Homer, wrote of the book:

I know of no better way to become acquainted with Dr. Homer. He wrote exactly as he spoke, and he spoke exactly as he wrote, with a gentle manner, and a smile on his face and in his voice. By re-reading his book I can recall the sound of his voice, and see again his bright eyes regarding me as I played for him.²

The Homers moved to Winter Park, Florida, in 1939. Here they both became actively interested in assisting students at nearby Rollins College. Mme. Homer also continued the private teaching she had begun when she gave up concert work, and she opened a voice studio in Winter Park in 1939.

In the year 1943-44 she gave scholarships of free voice lessons to the two outstanding women voice students at Rollins. From 1943 till her death she was "Honorary Adviser in Voice" at Rollins, and in 1947, just a little more than two months before her death, she was awarded the distinguished honor of the Algernon Sydney Medallion [for outstanding citizen] from the College.³

Dr. Homer was also active in the musical life at Rollins. On March 1, 1939, the college conferred upon him the honorary degree, Doctor of Music. On this occasion, Dr. Hamilton Holt, president of the college, paid tribute to Homer, saying:

Sidney Homer, artist, composer, author, for your

¹Ibid.

²Letter from Mrs. Richard Sias, Winter Park, Florida, September 12, 1962.

³Letter from Mrs. Eli Day, Assistant Archivist, Mills Memorial Library, Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida, August 14, 1962.

devotion to what the poet has personified as "Music, Heavenly Maid," for your gifts as a composer, and for the high ideals you have ever followed as a musician and a man, Rollins College confers upon you the degree of Doctor of Music, and admits you to all its rights and privileges.¹

It is interesting to note that, even on the occasion of the presentation of a musical honor, there was recognition of the man's character as well as the man's music. As Thorpe had written in 1931, "In natures like Homer's, there is not the usual duality of man and artist; there is integrity, the man and the artist being one."²

On May 2, 1943, Dr. Homer was honored by election to membership, with Mrs. Homer, in Pi Kappa Lambda, honorary music fraternity, by the Rollins College Chapter.³ In 1943, also, he was awarded the honorary degree Doctor of Music by the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia.

During these retirement years, Homer continued to compose, though he did not write songs:

Carl Engel, the new president of G. Schirmer, asked me to write piano pieces for children. I wrote three sets, forty-five in all. I wrote simple sonatas for piano, a string quartet, a sonata for piano and violin, and a trio for piano, violin, and cello.⁴

He also wrote some other chamber music which he did not attempt to have published but which has been photostated and performed.

¹Hamilton Holt, Dedicatory Address, March 1, 1939.

²See p. 18.

³Homer File, Archives, Rollins College.

⁴Homer, op. cit., p. 267.

On January 9, 1945, Louise and Sidney Homer celebrated their golden wedding anniversary. William T. Ellis, news correspondent, described the occasion in an article which he entitled "Fifty Golden Years":

So the anniversary was made a golden occasion. On one evening President Holt, of Rollins College, gave a reception in his spacious home to several hundred guests, many of them bearing distinguished names. It was what the society editors call "a brilliant occasion," with greeting from most of the famous of the musical world.¹

The Etude music magazine described the occasion musically:

Highlights of the evening included the singing by a chorus of Rollins' students of original songs written for the occasion by composers Samuel Barber and Gian Carlo Menotti.²

The following evening a special program was presented in the Annie Russell Theatre of Rollins College. A chorus of students sang four of Homer's songs, "Requiem," "Sheep and Lambs," "There's Heaven Above," and the "Banjo Song."³ Members of the Rollins College faculty presented some of his instrumental compositions:

Dr. Homer's Sonata in G minor for piano and violin, and the premier performance of an unpublished manuscript, "Andante," were presented by Alphonse Carlo, violinist, and Katherine Carlo, pianist. Helen Moore, concert pianist, performed a group of piano compositions which included "Afternoon Glow," from the suite "Lake George," three short pieces from "Early Impressions," "Impromptu,"

¹William T. Ellis, "Fifty Golden Years," Homer File, Archives, Rollins College.

²"A Memorable Anniversary," Etude, May, 1945, p. 260.

³Printed Program: "Rollins College Presents an Evening of Music Honoring Sidney and Louise Homer on their Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary: The Annie Russell Theatre, Winter Park, Florida, January 10, 1945, at 8:15 o'clock.

and "Original Theme and Variations."¹

Thus a proud community paid tribute to its two most famous citizens.

The story of Sidney Homer is much more than the account of the life of a musician. It is the story of the life of a distinguished citizen, devoted husband, and fond father. His family of five daughters and one son was as important to him as his art. He wrote that the progress of the family was " . . . the really absorbing and vital thing."² Five of his children are living. Joy, the youngest daughter, died in 1946, having already embarked on a career as journalist and lecturer, after serving as special field writer for the Chinese Famine Relief. Katharine, now Mrs. Douglas Fryer, lives in New York where she maintains a private piano studio. Louise, Mrs. Ernest Stires, resides in Lake George, New York. Hester, Mrs. Robert Henry, lives in Hague, New York, and Anne, Mrs. W. M. Doerflinger, makes her home in New Jersey. Sidney Homer, Jr., is in Wall Street and lives in New York City. Their letters attest to the great love and respect they felt for their father.

Sidney Homer died July 10, 1953. His wife had preceded him in death by some six years (May 6, 1947). They are buried in Lake George, New York, where they had established their permanent home.

¹"A Memorable Anniversary," Etude, May, 1945, p. 260.

²Homer, op. cit., p. 244.

Homer's songs represent an important section of American song-writing. He left them as his heritage to a world which knows that " . . . a song can say what nothing else can, today as always."¹

¹Samuel Barber, Preface to Seventeen Songs by Sidney Homer.

CHAPTER III

THE SONGS OF SIDNEY HOMER

Sidney Homer's songs include examples of virtually all the different types of songs found in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries--specifically: dramatic songs, serious songs, religious songs, love songs, songs of humor, songs of the South, and songs for and about children. His songs can be grouped quite logically under these headings not only because of the nature of their texts, but also because of the character of their musical settings.

Possibly the most fitting introduction to the Homer songs is a discussion of his setting of a short German poem, "Trost der Nacht." This little song, listed as Op. 3 by the composer, is the earliest work available. It was written while he was a student under Rheinberger during his years of study in the Royal School of Music in Munich, Germany. Although this piece has never been published, it was copyrighted in 1949 by the composer, and a limited number of photostat copies were made. His daughter wrote of this song, "Mother loved the melody, and as he had lost the manuscript, she urged him over the years to try to recall it and write it again."¹ In 1946 he dictated it to Mme. Homer, as he

¹Letter from Katharine Homer Fryer, January 23, 1963.

was unable to use his eyes for manuscript work at that time. This little night piece has a charming melody and a beautiful accompaniment. It is also well worth special examination because of the possible indications of a distinctive harmonic vocabulary to be found in later works. The flowing melodic line, even here, is characterized by the same easy, unpretentious movement that distinguishes his later works. The piano accompaniment is free and flowing and provides much of the harmonic variation and movement of the piece.

A predominance of both primary and secondary dominant sonorities, adding richness to so many of his later songs, is found even in this early work. Both the beginning and the closing measures of this song involve a characteristic use of such harmony.

Ex. 1.--"Trost der Nacht," first two measures.

Andante

Kla-ge nicht, be-trüb-tes Kind, kla-ge

mf *rit.* *a tempo*

The melody is gentle and lyric, rising beautifully to a high \underline{g}^2 for a quiet climax and then falling again to the final notes. The accompaniment repeats the opening

measures for the ending, concluding the song after the voice has sung its last phrase. This musical afterthought, found frequently in Homer's later songs, never fails to add a feeling of graceful completion.

This is a student's piece, perhaps, but one giving exciting anticipation of things to come. Already the composer shows his ease in handling a melody, and his understanding of sympathetic piano accompaniment.

Dramatic Songs

Harry Colin Thorpe, in a review of the songs of Sidney Homer, commented, "Enough has been said already to found a suspicion that Homer has a hankering for the dramatic."¹ Some of Homer's most memorable compositions are those of great dramatic impact. This is not surprising when one considers that Homer's wife was one of the greatest dramatic performers of her era. Having such an artist for whom to write music would inspire any composer toward this type of composition.

Op. 17 offers some of Homer's finest dramatic writing. The first number in this opus is the famous "How's My Boy?," a setting of a text by Sidney Dobell. This song is certainly one of Homer's best dramatic songs, and one of his best known. It has been called " . . . one of the most powerful and original songs ever written by an American, wrought in a style so individual as to make all comparison

¹Thorpe, op. cit., p. 54.

not only odious, but impossible."¹ The emotional impact of the song, upon first hearing it, is almost overwhelming. The refusal of the anguished mother to accept the fact that her boy has been lost at sea, even after she has realized the truth, has been pictured musically in such an expert manner by Homer that the grief of the woman becomes almost a personal tragedy to the listener. This song is a drama in every sense of the word: the characters are placed on a musical stage, and the tragedy is played out. This is accomplished through the treatment of both melody and rhythm.

This song, as are many of Homer's dramatic compositions, is a study in contrast. It is in definite sections: the mother's questions, and the sailor's responses.

The song is in the key of C major, but harmonic changes frequently render the key obscure. The character of the melody seems to have been drawn from the natural inflections of the human voice: as the mother's lines grow tense with emotion, the contour of the melody rises vividly with many chromatic inflections; the hushed, solemn lines of the sailor's responses are derived from segments of the whole-tone scale.

The rhythmic construction of the song is also dictated by the text. The opening measures are reminiscent of a rollicking sea chantey, while the contrasting sections are set in a measured rhythm of half notes. Much of the emotional

¹Ibid.

impact of the song is derived from the persistence of the sea-chantey rhythm even when the tragedy is realized by the mother. Musically this seems to be telling the listener of the anguished mother's refusal to believe that her son is dead.

Harmonically, this piece presents a vocabulary of wide variety. A study of the cadences alone will reveal the mastery of harmonic technique which characterized all of Homer's works. Skillful use of altered chords effect the smooth modulations between the contrasting sections:

Ex. 2.--"How's My Boy?," first two phrases.

Allegro

"Ho, Sailor of The sea! How's my boy-my boy?"

f

Gravely
mf piu lento

"What's your boy's name, good wife, And in what good ship sail'd he?"

mf piu lento

The musical score is handwritten and consists of two systems. The first system is marked 'Allegro' and features a vocal melody in the treble clef and a piano accompaniment in the grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The tempo is 'Allegro' and the dynamics include a forte 'f' marking. The lyrics are 'Ho, Sailor of The sea! How's my boy-my boy?'. The second system is marked 'Gravely' and 'mf piu lento'. It continues the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The lyrics are 'What's your boy's name, good wife, And in what good ship sail'd he?'. The piano part in the second system has a 'mf piu lento' marking. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is common time (C).

Extensive use of altered chords on the flat side throughout the song tend to render the key somewhat obscure and give the effect of transient modulations, but in spite of these chromatic excursions, the original key feeling is retained. An example of this is found in the mother's lines:

Ex. 3.--"How's My Boy?," measures 11-14.

might as well have asked some lands ma'n Yon-der down in the town. There's

not an ass in all the par-ish, But he knows my John!

Cresc.

Cresc.

The use of sequences, rising by half steps, gives fine dramatic feeling toward the climax. In the last phrase of the song, a hesitant, faltering rhythm created by eighth

rests in the melody changes the character of the sequential pattern and helps build toward the tremendous emotional climax which ends the piece. This climax culminates in a fortissimo chord, which is immediately followed by a pianissimo that chromatically resolves the harmonies to the original key.

Ex. 4.--"How's My Boy?," closing measures.

Handwritten musical score for "How's My Boy?" closing measures. The score is in 7/4 time and consists of three systems.

System 1: The vocal line begins with the lyrics "I'm not their mother! How's my boy — my boy?". Above the staff, the tempo markings "a tempo", "rit.", and "piu lento" are written. The piano accompaniment consists of chords and single notes.

System 2: The vocal line continues with the lyrics "Tell me of him, and no other! How's my boy — my boy?". Above the staff, the tempo markings "a tempo", "rit.", and "piu lento" are written. The piano accompaniment continues with chords and single notes.

System 3: The vocal line ends with the lyrics "Tell me of him, and no other! How's my boy — my boy?". Above the staff, the tempo markings "string.", "ss", "Agonized", and "rit." are written. The piano accompaniment features a fortissimo chord followed by a pianissimo resolution.

No. 3 of Op. 17 presents another of the fine dramatic songs of this composer, "Michael Robartes Bids his Beloved be at Peace." In this setting of a poem by William Butler Yeats, the opening lines of the verse suggest the musical motive: "I hear the shadowy horses, their long manes ashake." The horses' hoofs, "heavy with tumult," plunge up a minor triad to an altered dominant sonority, a dissonance suggesting misfortune and disaster, which the text of the poem describes:

Ex. 5.--"Michael Robartes Bids his Beloved be at Peace," opening measure.



This motive persists, even in the pianissimo passages, giving unity to the composition, and suggests, perhaps, the acceptance of the inevitable parting and possible death.

Again the harmonic technique of the composer makes this song memorable. The frequent modulations, familiar to Homer's dramatic settings, show his mastery of harmony. Extensive use of the Neapolitan chord, functioning as a pivotal chord to introduce new keys and adding unexpected richness to both accompaniment and solo line, is the most frequently

used modulatory technique.

The strident rhythm of the opening section, illustrated in ex. 5 above, is left only in a brief middle section. In a beautifully solemn three-measure phrase marked lento, use is again made of the Neapolitan chord, and seemingly unrelated harmonies are subdued into smooth quietness:

Ex. 6.--"Michael Robartes Bids his Beloved be at Peace," measures 22-24.

Lento
with deep feeling

van - i - ty of Sleep, Hope, Dream,

end - less De - sire!

Flexibility of meters, changing at will to fit the rhythm of the text, move the poem rhythmically forward with undisturbed smoothness.

The form is basically A B A. After the lyric love theme of the middle section, a return is made to the original motive for the last section, musically suggesting the inevitability of the forthcoming disaster.

This song was one which Homer regarded as one of his finest. Samuel Barber described it as "impassioned and dramatic."¹ It offers fine drama to the singer, and a richness of harmonic vocabulary seldom equalled even by Homer himself.

Homer's dramatic songs seem to deal mainly with human oppression and misfortune. A song which deals with such pathos is "The Pauper's Drive," Op. 18, no. 3, a setting of a poem by T. Noel. As was the case in "How's My Boy?" and "Michael Robartes Bids his Beloved be at Peace," this song is notable for the descriptive nature of the piano accompaniment. The accompaniment in "How's My Boy?" suggested a rhythmic sea chantey for a drama of the sea. "The Pauper's Drive" opens with repeated eighth notes in the accompaniment, simulating the clip-clop of the horses' hoofs bearing a hearse down a quiet street.

Unlike most of Homer's accompaniments, which do not double the solo line, the melody of this piece is doubled

¹Barber, Preface to Seventeen Songs by Sidney Homer.

throughout the sections of the song depicting the journey to the grave. The dirge of the driver is a chromatically descending melody in the key of g minor, which is derived by the use of the German augmented-sixth chord. The song is abruptly brought back to the original key of f-sharp minor by the repetition of a single tone, c-sharp, sounded without preparation. By its persistent reiteration, the dominant of the original key is re-established. These abrupt, unexpected modulations are found throughout the piece, but by the repetitive pattern of the song, do not sound eccentric or illogical.

Homer, especially in his dramatic songs, uses the device of abrupt modulation often. It is as if he were bending the harmonies, forcing them to fit the dramatic character of the song, never allowing the "expected" harmonies to become master of what he has to say.

Variations in meter, invariably found in Homer songs to accomodate the natural rhythm of the text, are found even in this strongly rhythmic setting. The basic duple pulse changes to a four-beat pulse in the lento section, and in the lyric middle section, a triple meter is used. However, rhythmically, the sound of the eighth-note pattern, imitative of the horses' hoofs, dominates the entire piece.

This lament for a forgotten man demonstrates the ability of Sidney Homer to convey strong emotion without allowing sentiment to become cheap or maudlin. Although the chromatic melody of the driver descending mournfully almost be-

comes a wail for the dead, the regular eighth-note rhythm of the opening and closing sections somehow conveys the impression that the business of life goes on--even bearing death to the grave.

The foot-tapping rhythm of a country fiddler has been captured and built into a dramatic little song in the setting of "The Fiddler of Dooney," Op. 20, with text by William Butler Yeats. The fiddler, sure that St. Peter will call him through the gate before he calls his brother and cousin, who are priests, fiddles his after-beat rhythm gaily, for the "good are always merry, and the merry love to dance!" The rhythm of the dance prevails through the entire song, which is essentially in an A A B A form. The first phrase characterizes the rhythm and essential mood of the piece:

Ex. 7.--"The Fiddler of Dooney," first phrase.

When I play on my fiddle in Dooney, Folk dance like a wave of the sea -

With the allegro molto tempo emphasizing the underlying joyousness of the song, the listener finds himself wanting to join in an after-beat clap characteristic of folk-tune

fiddling songs. The only break in this texture occurs when the natural rhythm of the poem necessitates a change, and in these places, found at the end of each verse of the poem, the recurrent harmonic formula of the beginning of each verse is enriched by use of supertonic harmonies:

Ex. 8.--"The Fiddler of Dooney," measures 6-8.

The musical score for measures 6-8 of "The Fiddler of Dooney" is presented in two systems. The first system features a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The lyrics "Mo-ha-ra-bu-ice," are written below the vocal line. The piano accompaniment is in bass clef. Dynamics include a piano (p) marking at the start of measure 6, a crescendo (cresc.) marking over measures 7 and 8, and a fermata over the final note of the vocal line in measure 8. The second system continues the piano accompaniment, showing a piano (p) marking at the start of measure 6, a crescendo (cresc.) marking over measures 7 and 8, and a fermata over the final note of the piano line in measure 8.

Fuller sonorities, derived from the basic formula of the first section, build to the climax, as the confident little fiddler pictures his entrance through the gate of heaven, with friends all welcoming him and St. Peter smiling and calling him through before he beckons the clerical relatives.

The settings of three poems from the volume, The Widow in the Bye Street, by John Masefield, are among the last of Homer's published songs and should be included in the list of his finest dramatic works. The first song, entitled "Down Bye Street," is a musical description of a work-worn woman, sewing her weary life away. The running eighth-note melody

and corresponding sixteenth-note accompaniment figure musically depict the monotony and endlessness of her work:

Ex. 9.--"Down Bye Street," opening measures.

Allegro

Down Bye Street, in a lit-tle Shrop-shire town there lived a wi-dow

A contrasting section in f-sharp minor follows. The busy accompaniment figures of the first section are replaced by a chordal harmonic background as the text tells of the widow's thoughts of her dead husband and the hopes she has for her son. The two contrasting sections of the song alternate with each other as the mood of the text shifts from the description of the present to the contemplation of the past and future. Homer uses the natural form of the d minor scale with the characteristic lowered seventh scale step in the A sections. It is a most effective presentation of the spirit of the poem--a text telling of hopelessness, monotony, and the complete absence of warmth and light.

The second song of the set is the prayer of the widow and her son. Her son is in prison, and has been condemned

to death for manslaughter, a crime committed in a jealous quarrel. An expansive, warm, and noble diatonic melodic line characterizes this piece.

The last poem, "The Widow's Song," is perhaps the most outstanding and dramatic of the set, primarily because of its use of dissonances and borrowed harmonies, the dissonant motive being suggested by the beginning lines of the poem, "Singing her crazy song, the Mother goes." The widow's mind has given way, after the son, raised so proudly, has been executed.

Following an A B A B A form, the sections of this song are marked by contrast of mood, tempo (a lento marking in contrast to the allegro of the A sections), and harmonic structure. The first section, a musical depiction of the widow's grief-crazed, rambling song, is built on half-diminished seventh chords, whose resolutions are repeatedly denied. The first section is in itself an A B A B form, distinguished by tempo (allegro and andante), although the harmonic motive is carried through sequentially in transposed form.

The B sections, in the key of D major, stand in sharp contrast to the alternate sections because of a traditional harmonic idiom in contrast to the use of non-tonal color chords used in the first section. The text of the B section tells of the laborers on their way to work, seeing the widow in the meadow "plaiting basil in her hair."

The final section, in which the curious laborers, recalling her strange song, try it themselves, and "with full throat, . . . they lift it clear," and the harmonic dissonance of the half-diminished seventh, now the song of both the widow and the workmen, ends the piece.

Ex. 10.--"The Widow's Song," closing measures.

Andante

rit. \rightrightarrows PP

mixed with the swish of ma-my gall-ing glowers.

p

rit. \rightrightarrows PP

pp

Serious Songs

A true art song is the perfect fusion of words and music, neither submerging the other, but rather the one enhancing the other. The adjusting of vocal line and accompaniment to achieve this musical balance requires the sensitive touch of an artist. In many of his serious songs, Sidney Homer succeeded in achieving this delicate balance of tone and word which results in musical beauty. Perhaps in these serious songs, he came closest to creating the miracle which Browning described when "out of three sounds he brought forth

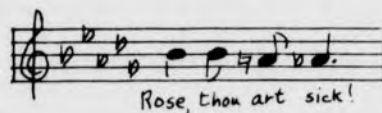
not a fourth sound, but a star."¹

These art songs of Homer are, for the most part, short compositions. They seek to create but a single musical impression. Yet in these songs, Homer has presented some of his finest harmonic writing. The wealth of tonal material and color make them memorable.

One of the finest of these songs is the setting of a text from William Blake's Songs of Experience. It is entitled "The Sick Rose," and is listed as Op. 26, no. 1. This song, used with effectiveness by Samuel Barber in recital, has been described as " . . . holding infinite riches in its brief pages."² Melody and accompaniment have been blended to equal a whole greater than the sum of its parts.

The melodic idea of "The Sick Rose" is a simple sequence of three tones, descending chromatically:

Ex. 11.--"The Sick Rose," opening measure.

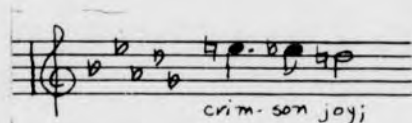


Around this melodic motive is built the entire song, as each phrase but repeats this pattern on a different step of the scale. Each succeeding phrase rises in pitch until the climax of the song is reached:

¹Hall, op. cit., p. 4.

²Barber, Preface to Seventeen Songs by Sidney Homer.

Ex. 12.--"The Sick Rose," measure 6.



The melody then falls an octave to the final phrase, which adds one more descending half step, thus ending the solo line on the supertonic, leaving the accompaniment to complete the resolution to tonic harmony. This unfinished effect, thus created in the voice line, is found often in Homer's songs. Also familiar to Homer songs is the building of melody through sequence.

The essential harmonic movement in the ten brief but poignant measures of this song is produced by the supertonic seventh chord passing through several of its altered forms and progressing ultimately to dominant harmony. In the expert hands of Sidney Homer, this traditional progression takes on new color and dramatic feeling.

The key to the harmonic structure is best illustrated by the first two measures of the song (see ex. 13). The basic harmonic scheme is enriched by the expressive use of the appoggiatura in the solo line and other non-harmonic tones in the accompaniment.

The piece is set in two-measure phrases, each one having essentially the same harmonic formula. A transient modulation into the key of e-flat minor in the middle section does not change the basic harmonic scheme.

Ex. 13.--"The Sick Rose," opening measures.

Molto lento
p with deep emotion

O Rose, thou art sick! The in- vis - i - ble worm, That

p molto legato

The effect of such delayed dominant sound gives an overwhelming feeling of striving, of reaching toward fulfillment, a feeling which appropriately catches the spirit of the text. The chords are cloudy and dark, even as the worm, "who does thy life destroy." A richness of harmonic texture seldom found in American song is revealed in these brief measures.

Another serious song of entirely different concept, but done with the same artistry is "The Country of the Camisards," Op. 15, no. 1. This setting of a poem by Robert Louis Stevenson has been called a powerful but subtle protest against war.¹ The music is quiet, describing the peace and repose of a field that had once been a battleground. The

¹Thorpe, op. cit., p. 59.

harmonies are almost austere; the melodic line is quiet and peaceful.

The piece is cast in D-flat major, and the melody moves evenly in a flowing quarter-note rhythm. The basic form is strophic, the settings of the two verses of the poem varying only in the final phrase. The melody does not exceed the span of a single octave--b-flat to b¹-flat. The harmonic structure is somewhat unusual, for where the solo line would suggest a traditional dominant to tonic progression, there are altered chords, suggesting at each half cadence a modulation to F-flat major. However, through enharmonic treatment of the chords, the original key is never left.

The abrupt departure from the expected harmonic progression is one of the principal characteristics of the Homer songs. However, in Homer's hands, this color device always sounds smooth and quite natural. An example of this unexpected progression is found in the final measures of the song, where the melody falls to a deceptive final cadence involving elements borrowed from the relative minor superimposed over sub-dominant seventh harmonies. Quietness, peace, and repose characterize this setting.

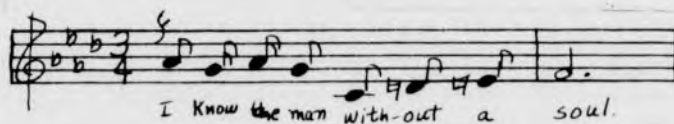
It has been said that Homer never made a weak setting of a Stevenson poem.¹ "The Country of the Camisards," as with the well-known "Requiem," evokes a mood of quietness, but at the same time offers fine and subtle harmonic interest to the sensitive performer.

¹Thorpe, op. cit., p. 58.

A setting of a poem by James Stephens, "The King of the Fairy Men," Op. 34, no. 1, presents an interesting departure from the typical pianistic accompaniment patterns found in many of Homer's songs. For this ironic poem of a man without a soul, who appears happy, but who, according to the poem, "bites the ground in agony when no one is watching," Homer has provided a studied but exciting setting in a contrapuntal style. Only in the last phrase of the song is a chordal texture added to the line to give impetus to the minor mode in which the piece is cast.

The vocal line is doubled without deviation by the treble voice of the accompaniment. The first section is cast in the key of f minor, making an especially prominent use of the raised sixth and seventh degrees in ascending passages. The pattern of the vocal line is repetitious, almost to the point of monotony, depicting the dreariness of a life so imprisoned as is the existence of the king of the fairy men. The first section follows this doleful motive:

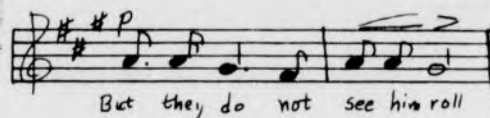
Ex. 14.--"The King of the Fairy Men," measures 1-2.



This phrase is repeated without change, until the end of the first section is reached, when the same sequence is found a third lower, leading to the second section, built in the key of the Neapolitan chord, the key signature changing to that

of f-sharp minor. The melody then becomes more tense as it eliminates the large skips found in the first section:

Ex. 15.--"The King of the Fairy Men," measures 9-10.



From this the song is taken back to the first melodic pattern, and to the original key for the cadence, following an A B A form.

The accompaniment follows a contrapuntal pattern of eighth notes throughout the piece. Interesting use of the dissonant intervals of major and minor seconds depicts musically the dissonance of the life of the man who could not live with himself:

Ex. 16.--"The King of the Fairy Men," measures 1-2.



"The King of the Fairy Men" offers interesting contrast in style to most of Homer's other work. It is a good example of repetition for a purpose, and monotony for creation of a mood.

Any composer who makes a setting of the famous lines

by Alfred Lord Tennyson, "Sweet and Low," can hardly avoid being influenced by the famous setting by Joseph Barnby. Op. 7, no. 1, offers Homer's setting of these lines. The general mood, and rhythmic concept are faintly reminiscent of Barnby's setting, but the harmonic structure is all Homer. Note especially the use of the chord of the augmented-sixth in the first phrases:

Ex. 17.--"Sweet and Low," measures 1-4.

Andante
Tenderly (without dragging)

Sweet and low, sweet and low, Wind of the western sea!

p legato

The gently swaying rhythm and rich subdominant harmonies make this a tender and nostalgic setting.

Love Songs

Some of the loveliest of Homer's hundred songs are his love songs. Homer's love for strong dominant harmonies, for sweeping melodic lines, and warm, flowing piano accompaniments reveals a romantic spirit in countless of his works, and this spirit is given full sway in his love songs. These

songs are tender, compassionate, and lyric in nature, and it is to Homer's credit that they do not become too much so but, in every case, remain simple and in good taste. He chose, for the most part, short texts and wrote music of directness and simplicity.

Of the love songs, "Dearest," Op. 24, attained perhaps the widest popularity and is the best known. It was described by Felix Deyo as

. . . a song that is thoroughly American. . . Its melody is of the most direct type, simple and unaffected, charged with tenderness of natural feeling, and complemented by a gracious accompaniment never in unison, but always in accord with the vocal counterpart.¹

A strophic form is employed; the key is D-flat major. It is a song appealing to the singer, both for its flowing melodic line and for an opportunity for a nice climax on a high g-flat in the last phrase of the song.

Many of the characteristics of Homer's unique style are here--the flowing accompaniment moving in contrasting direction to the melody, the pentatonic tendency of the melodic line (a quality found in many of Homer's more introspective songs), and the warmth and romanticism of the harmonization.

A song full of lyric beauty set in simple harmonic style is "When Death to Either Shall Come," Op. 34, no. 2, a setting of a text by Robert Bridges. It is representative of the Homer songs in which he is content to write a good

¹Felix Deyo, "The Neglected Songs of an American Composer," International Lyric Courier, July, 1949, p. 6.

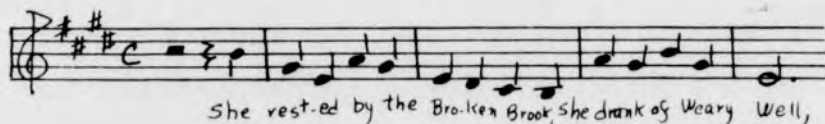
phrase, repeat it, and end the song simply, with no elaborations or complications. The very simplicity of the strophic form used emphasizes the calm, tender love and compassion felt for the loved one.

It is in D-flat major, with the melody having a pentatonic outline in its descending line. The warmth of the accompaniment, a pattern of descending sixths, adds to the depth of feeling. The harmonization is the familiar formula--I, IV, V, I--but is given added color by use of the added sixth in the broken chord accompaniment.

"When Death to Either Shall Come" is a sensitive, beautiful love song, distinguished, not for its originality, but for its sincerity and simplicity. It is a song of pure sentiment, yet one which maintains a certain detachment and artistic restraint. As in the other love songs of Homer, this work never becomes cloying or overly sentimental.

For the singer who can sing a simple melodic line with poignancy and tenderness, "The Unforgotten," Op. 15, no. 3, should be a welcome addition to his repertoire. It is a setting of a poem by Robert Louis Stevenson. The melody is of sustained tenderness, and should be sung, as the music directs, simply and with legato movement. It moves gracefully and quietly, without brilliant climax or dynamic variation:

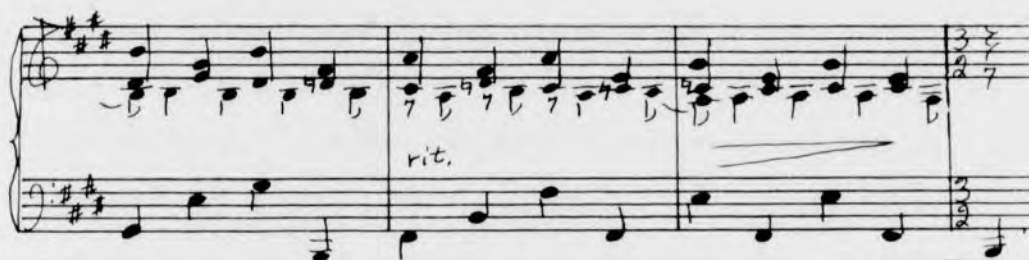
Ex. 18.--"The Unforgotten," first phrase.



This melodic phrase is the essential pattern for the song. The accompaniment contains an after-beat on each count, but the over-all smoothness of concept is not broken.

Here familiar Homer harmonies are again revealed in the quiet accompaniment. The color of the harmonization lies in use of the supertonic and submediant harmonies, with tones borrowed from the minor modes:

Ex. 19.--"The Unforgotten," measures 14-16.



This song captures a simple poignancy which only waits for the singer to reveal. It can be an immensely moving piece for both singer and accompanist.

In Op. 28 is found a love song in brilliant contrast to the usual intimate settings of Sidney Homer. "Sing to Me, Sing," is a passionate song of joy, set to a text by W. E. Henley. It is a brilliant concert piece which was eventually given an orchestration. The accompaniment is powerful--almost dynamically overpowering by contemporary standards, containing full sonorities and sweeping runs. There is a brilliant climax at the end of the piece--a high f-sharp sustained over a broad and sweeping piano accompaniment.

Of singular beauty is the setting of a Robert Browning

poem, "A Woman's Last Word," Op. 12, no. 2. There is a translucent quality in this song whose text is the pleading of a woman, weary of the quarrel, wanting love to overcome all.

In a departure from the usual independence of the melodic line with the accompaniment, the melody of this piece is derived from the chordal structure of the piano accompaniment. The vocal line merely outlines the accompanying chordal harmony. The voice part, thus, is not as freely flowing as are the vocal lines in most of Homer's works, but this harmonic concept of melody does achieve a purpose. The resulting somewhat angular contour of the melody seems closer to speech than to song, and a certain dignity is achieved. A song-speech concept is the underlying musical intent.

Homer's use of both dominant and non-dominant seventh chords seems to contribute to the general effect of translucence throughout the song. These chords, never quite sounding as if a resolution is achieved, create the feeling that the singer waits for a response, as, indeed, the text of the poem would indicate: "Let's contend no more, Love, strive nor weep: All be as before, Love, only sleep!" (see ex. 20).

Only in the closing measures is a final cadential feeling established, but even here the solo line reaches only partial repose, ending as it does on the third of the tonic chord. A strong authentic cadence is thus never established. The result is rare beauty and real artistry of composition in a song which, although one of Homer's earliest

works, is one of his loveliest.

Ex. 20.--"A Woman's Last Word," measures 1-4.

Andante

Let's contend no more, Love, Strive nor weep: All be as before, Love, Only sleep:

Religious Songs

In an era of song writing that brought forth an abundance of semi-popular and overly sentimental sacred songs, it is indeed refreshing to find the simple warmth and directness of Homer's religious pieces. There is a deep sincerity in them, and the spirituality of the composer as revealed in them could never be doubted. They are not, for the most part, however, songs for a church service. Rather, they are warm, human presentations of a faith unbound to any particular creed. There is much variety in these songs, the different types including stirring marching songs, simple folk-like melodies, and impassioned declarations of an eternal faith.

One of the best-known of Homer's songs of a religious nature is the setting of Robert Louis Stevenson's "Requiem,"

Op. 15, no. 2. Choosing a musical setting which is quiet and unadorned, Homer has made this song generally lyric in nature but with a suggestion of religious somberness and sobriety in the broad chordal accompaniment.

This song is in a simple strophic form with the two stanzas identically cast. The key is G-flat major--the meter common time. Using these simple devices, Homer maintains throughout the song the calm dignity and reserve which are established in the very first measures:

Ex. 21.--"Requiem," opening measures.

Adagio *f*

Un-der the wide and star-ry sky

f

Homer has conscientiously avoided any dramatic exuberance by restricting the range of the vocal line to less than an octave--e¹-flat to d²-flat. Likewise the quiet rhythm of the first two measures remains unvaried throughout the rest of the song.

A familiar Homer phrase ending on the chord of the supertonic lends a religious tone, recalling a modal sound:

Ex. 22.--"Requiem," measures 5-6.

mf cresc.

Glad did I live and - glad - ly die,

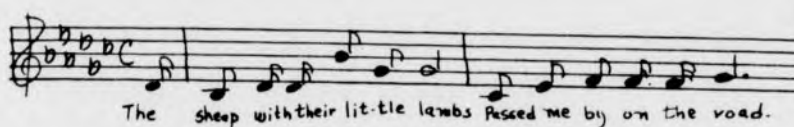
mf cresc.

This setting of the "Requiem" is notable for the subjective approach to the text. It is done in impeccable taste. Artistic restraint and a certain detachment insure the timelessness and popularity of this short song.

Perhaps the song which identifies the composer more than any one of the other hundred songs he wrote is the famous "Sheep and Lambs," Op. 31, a setting of a poem by Katharine Tynan Hinkson. Homer chose an appropriate pastoral setting, with gentle harmonies, and a smooth, folk-like melody. The flowing accompaniment adds to the over-all effect of repose and quietness. It is easy to picture a shepherd with his sheep passing by in the twilight of an April day.

This song is dedicated to the composer's wife, the famous American contralto, Louise Homer, and the graceful dip of the beginning notes of each phrase would seem to emphasize the best range of a contralto voice:

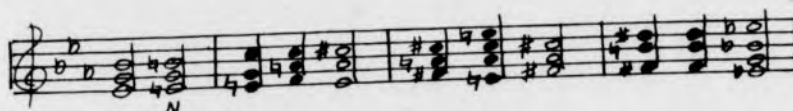
Ex. 23.--"Sheep and Lambs," measures 3-4.



The Homer penchant for modulation by the Neapolitan chord is found throughout this song. In the climax, four measures of rather complicated harmonic structure, he shows his love for this chord, for he uses it to build the harmonies upward to the notes of the climax, and then abruptly slips back to his original tonic through enharmonic treatment of the chords (see ex. 24).

This interesting pattern of modulation evolves from the chromatic reharmonization of a common tone from one chord to the next. This process is accompanied by an ascending figure in both the treble accompaniment and the solo line--all driving toward a strong climax on the words, "Two stark crosses between." The cadential chord is sudden, unexpected, and quite startling in the pastoral mood of the song, but here the words justify the effect:

Ex. 25.--"Sheep and Lambs," harmonization, measures 17-20.



This song has stood the test of time. Choral arrange-

Ex. 24.--"Sheep and Lambs," measures 17-20.

Piu lento (with intense compassion) *cresc.*

Rest for the Lamb of God. Up on the hill top

mf *cresc.*

green, On- ly a cross of shame,

cresc. rit.

Two stark crosses be- tween.

cresc. rit. *ff atempo* *dim.* *rit.*

ments of it have been made by Carl Deis, and it remains a favorite both here and abroad.¹ A meditative mood, accomplished with expressive brevity and distinctive but subdued harmonic colors make this a song of beauty.

"Mary's Baby," a simple but moving setting of a text by Rutherford McLeod, is another of Homer's fine sacred songs, although it is generally less familiar than those just described. It is cast in a typical three-part form, the sections being set off by contrast of key, theme, meter, and tempo. The first and last sections lie in the key of b-flat minor, though by avoiding the a-natural of the harmonic minor, a certain modal sound is obtained. The middle section, only four measures long, employs the sudden contrast of the parallel major mode. As is typical of Homer settings, the meter is changed, in this case, measure by measure, to fit the natural rhythmic inflection of the text. In this song, the alternating $\frac{2}{4}$ and $\frac{3}{4}$ measures tend to draw the melody more closely together. The feeling of a regular pulse is destroyed, and the resulting metric vagueness reinforces the modal feeling in the first and last sections. The middle section, by contrast, is in $\frac{4}{4}$ meter with a more traditional harmonic and melodic palette. The contrast of a quasi-modal minor key followed by major then reverting to modal minor tonalities is most effective.

¹Sidney Homer, Jr., brings this out in a letter to the author, March 18, 1963: "As of today 'Sheep and Lambs' is still selling many thousands of copies a year not only in the United States but in England, Australia, and elsewhere."

The interesting melodic pattern is composed of simple ascending and descending scale patterns, pentatonic in feeling. The accompaniment follows the scale motive, but always moves in a direction opposite to that of the melody. The melody never exceeds the span of an octave--d¹-flat to d²-flat.

The harmonic vocabulary is simple in this gentle song. Homer departs from the a-flat in the b-flat minor scale only once in the first section, using a dominant chord with an a-natural, interestingly enough, on the very human word, "born"--"Christ was born in Mary's pain." This establishes a tone center in the harmonic minor scale which is immediately abandoned in the subsequent ascending scale pattern. The middle section, in B-flat major, adds to the accompaniment the thirds of the chords--the accompaniment now rising and falling in parallel thirds. The third section is the same as the first, with the song ending quietly on a simple b-flat minor chord.

The emotional result of such construction is one of mysticism in the first and last sections, fitting the mystical idea expressed in the text--"Light came forth from Mary's womb." The middle section brings the listener back to the human aspects of the crucifixion--"They murdered Jesus on the cross"--the thirds clearly defining the key and leaving no shadowy cloud of tonality as do the single tones of the accompaniment in the other sections. The very quietness of this song is forceful and the simplicity of harmonization fits the mood of wonderment and passion.

In describing Homer's religious music, Thorpe wrote: "But Homer is not self-bound, creed-bound, or cult-bound; he can say with Whitman, 'My spirit has passed in compassion . . . around the whole earth.'¹ Sidney Homer's religious music has indeed encompassed all faiths. Contrast these quiet songs with the stirring march rhythms of "General William Booth Enters into Heaven," and with the impassioned declaration of faith in "The Eternal Goodness," and one concludes that Homer, in his sacred songs, seemed to seek expression for all creeds with natural, warm, spontaneous music.

Songs of the South

American composers have long been inspired by the music of the Southland. The sometimes gay, sometimes plaintive music of the Negro at work and play, the impassioned fervor and deep religious utterances of the spiritual, and the nostalgia evoked by stories of plantation life have caught the interest of American composers ever since the days of Stephen Foster. Homer's songs of the South are eleven in number: the Bandanna Ballads, Op. 22, and Six Songs of the Old South, Op. 27. The texts are all taken from the poems of Howard Weeden. The songs are generally nostalgic in nature and romantic in spirit, depicting the romance of the region. The crooning lullaby of a Negro mother, the lament of a servant for his departed master, and the twang of a banjo played by a young man singing of his love can all be

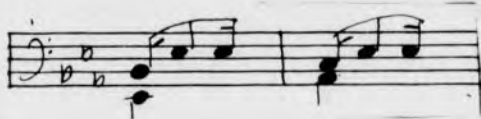
¹Thorpe, op. cit., p. 54.

heard in these songs which, in their day, proved to be among Homer's most popular compositions. Simple, unaffected music, they have a direct appeal to every American.

Two of the Bandanna Ballads make use of the syncopated rhythms which are faintly reminiscent of the ragtime rhythms of the Negro songs of the South. The characteristic sound of the banjo is suggested in both "Mammy's Lullaby" and the famous "Banjo Song."

"Mammy's Lullaby" is one of the most charming of the Ballads. The accompaniment consists of only two figures:

Ex. 26.--"Mammy's Lullaby," accompaniment figure:



Against this accompaniment is woven a crooning melody, gracefully weaving its tune in a rhythmic style so constructed that it achieves the careless, non-rhythmic chant of a primitive folk melody.

The melodic figure upon which the whole song is based is the downward leap of a seventh appearing on the words, "Swing low" (tonic to subdominant harmonies). Never does the succeeding melody rise above nor drop more than one tone below the span of this initial skip. The crooning monotony of a mother's lullaby is captured artfully and expressively in this little song, perhaps the finest, musically, of the Ballads.

The second of the Bandanna Ballads, "Uncle Rome," departs from the descriptive type of accompaniment found in "Mammy's Lullaby" and "Banjo Song," and is simply a sentimental ballad with a strong chordal accompaniment, recalling with nostalgia the days made happy by the beloved white "massa." The song is in E-flat major, employing a simple harmonic vocabulary of tonic, dominant, and dominant seventh chords. The sentiment of its text makes this a popular concert number.

The fourth of the Bandanna Ballads is the famous "Banjo Song." Homer here again employs syncopated rhythms in the accompaniment and imitates the typical chord progressions of a banjo player--I, V, I. The spirit of the old-fashioned popular banjo tune is caught in this little song, which, while lacking any interesting harmonic or rhythmic constructions that would set it apart, still possesses the kind of tune that runs through one's head and is so folk-like in character that a certain uniqueness is achieved. The tune rises sequentially until, for a phrase, it becomes a descant, singing merrily away to the melody now being played in the accompaniment. "A Banjo Song" is a little tune of joy and gaiety, and in spite of Homer's branding it himself as "a little cheap and a little dressy,"¹ will probably go on singing itself, year after year, happily unaware of its shortcomings.

¹Homer, op. cit., p. 204.

A song which reveals its composer's distinctive style in every phrase is "Way Down South," Op. 27, no. 1. This song, which is one of the set, "Songs of the Old South," suggests the warmth and color of the region--blue skies, mocking birds, banjo sounds, and the friendly brown face of the Negro. The melody is derived almost completely from the pentatonic scale:

Ex. 27.--"Way Down South," opening measures.

The image shows two staves of musical notation for the opening of the song "Way Down South". The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The melody is written on a single staff. The first staff contains the first six measures, and the second staff contains the next six measures. The lyrics are written below the notes.

An a-zure sky, a warm brown face, Soft black eyes and a
 dar-zling mouth, A red ben-dan-na, Touched with gold—

The accompaniment has a gently flowing melody of its own, weaving gracefully around the melody. Added warmth and romanticism are achieved by use of appoggiaturas in the accompaniment harmonies. Changes from triple to duple meter do not interrupt the smooth flow of the melody.

This song reflects Homer in a gentle, nostalgic mood, writing a purely lyric melody, obviously enjoying its simplicity, and being content with conventional harmonic progressions.

Songs of Humor

Under the heading, Six Cheerful Songs, Homer, in his

Op. 37, set to music six well-known American folk poems. "Specially Jim," "An Idaho Ball," "Casey at the Bat," "A Plantation Ditty," "The Height of the Ridiculous," and "Christmas Chimes" comprise this set. In contrast to the rich chromatic harmony usually found in Homer's works, these lighthearted songs use a very simple harmonic vocabulary and rely heavily on fast-moving tempos and catchy tunes for their impact. They can hardly be compared in quality to the serious songs, or the love songs, but they do achieve a certain cheerfulness and good humor.

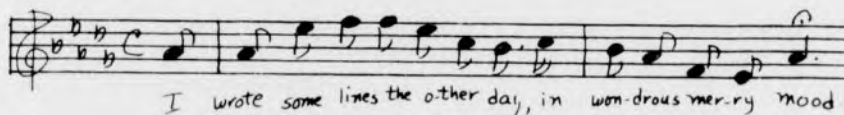
"An Idaho Ball" is a lively, foot-tapping setting of a country square dance with rhythmic and melodic devices suggestive of the sawing strings of the old-time fiddler. The caller is the soloist, singing his buoyant dance calls merrily and with spirit.

Perhaps the most novel of the group and one of the most entertaining as a program number is "The Height of the Ridiculous." The Oliver Wendell Holmes poem of the unhappy man who dared not write "as funny as I can" has been given a musical setting fast of pace and one which succeeds in catching musically the droll humor of the verse. It is a merry tune, somewhat angular, but catching the understated style of humor of the poem (see ex. 28).

Poems more subtle in humor inspired Homer to finer writing. The charming little song, "Ferry Me Across the Water," with words by Christina Rossetti, is as beautiful as it is capricious and merry. With lilting arpeggio accompan-

iment, the young girl, with flirting manner and merry blue eyes, asks the dour boatman to "Ferry me across the water; Do, Boatman, do." Completely unimpressed by blue eyes and teasing manner, the boatman's response brings an abrupt end to the buoyant gaiety of the girl's lines (see ex. 29). A capricious humor makes this little song, dedicated to Homer's daughter, Louise, who was also a singer, a most charming bit of fun.

Ex. 28.--"The Height of the Ridiculous," opening measures.



Ex. 29.--"Ferry Me Across the Water," closing measures.

The musical notation for Example 29 consists of two staves. The top staff is in treble clef, key of B-flat major, and common time. It contains three measures: the first has a quarter note B-flat, a quarter note D, and a quarter note E; the second has a quarter note F, a quarter note G, a quarter note A, and a quarter note B-flat; the third has a quarter note C, a quarter note B-flat, a quarter note A, and a half note G. The bottom staff is in bass clef, key of B-flat major, and common time. It contains three measures: the first has a quarter note B-flat, a quarter note D, and a quarter note E; the second has a quarter note F, a quarter note G, a quarter note A, and a quarter note B-flat; the third has a quarter note C, a quarter note B-flat, a quarter note A, and a half note G. Below the staves, the lyrics "Is you've a pen-ny in your purse, I'll fer-ry you." are written in a cursive script.

Children's Songs

Homer moves with unselfconscious ease from the dramatic to the tender and from the passionate to the lyric.

His songs for and about children are among his most charming compositions. In his setting of the Sing-Song verses by Christina Rossetti, he can truly be described, as Thorpe stated, as "writing upon the lintels of the doorpost, 'whim,'"¹ for in these little pieces he reveals charm, tenderness, and a perfect understanding of the wonder of a child's fancies. The set, when performed in its entirety, moves capriciously from allegro to lento tempos, from staccato to legato markings, from melodies encompassing only five notes to spans of an octave and a fourth in others. One page reveals the tender love song of a mother, the next a vivacious imitation of a rooster's crow. Such musical fancy cannot help but endear itself to the listener.

"Koo-koo-roo-koo," a lively setting of a child's greeting to a new day, presents a sprightly imitation of the rooster's crow:

Ex. 30.--"Koo-koo-roo-koo," opening measures.

Koo-Koo-Koo-Roo! Koo-Koo-Koo-Roo! Crows the cock be-fore the morn;

¹Thorpe, op. cit., p. 49.

The song achieves a real feeling of exultation in the joyousness of the closing measures:

Ex. 31.--"Koo-koo-roo-koo," closing measures.

The day, the day - the day, the day, the day is spring- ing.

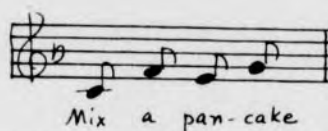
Of utmost simplicity is "Boats Sail on the River," a little piece which spins a dreaming melody of lyric warmth and beauty. The use of secondary dominant harmonies move the piece forward with grace and ease:

Ex. 32.--"Boats Sail on the River," opening measures.

Boats sail on the ri- vers, And ships sail on the seas.

An energetic melody of jumping eighth notes characterizes "Mix a Pancake, Stir a Pancake," the tune which ends Part I of the Sing-Song. The melodic line is built on a sequential pattern based on the motive:

Ex. 33.--"Mix a Pancake, Stir a Pancake," opening measures.



The sequential pattern rises with each succeeding phrase. The vocal line has unexpected extensions of melody continuing over the expected phrase ending, lending a catch-it-if-you-can quality to the melody as well as the words.

"Lullaby, Oh Lullaby!," number five of Part II, presents one of Homer's most beautiful examples of a quiet, sustained legato phrase:

Ex. 34.--"Lullaby, Oh Lullaby," opening measures.

Molto lento ($\text{♩} = 52$)
p sustained, with deep feeling

Lul-la-by, oh lul-la-by! Flowers are closed and lambs are sleep-ing;

p molto legato

A musical depiction of a mother putting her child to sleep, the melody has the gentle repetitious monotony best suited to a lullaby. The compass of the melody is child-size, that of a single octave. The steady movement of the quarter-note rhythm and the gentle descent of the diatonic melody are soothing and show how sensitively the composer has matched the music to text and mood. The harmonic pattern is traditional, and the downward drift of the harmonies support the slender melodic line with graceful ease. A tender cradle song, with simple melodic phrases, the closing measures' repetition of a single tone, pianissimo, suggest that the babe has indeed drifted into the world of sleep and dreams.

"In the Meadow--What in the Meadow?," number seven of Part II, is the musical picture of a child's world; meadows full of blooming flowers, and perchance, a secret fairy ring which only children may find. The song is in G major, the basic form strophic, with the only variation being an added three measures at the end of the song. The meter is regular-- $\frac{4}{4}$ time throughout the piece, the tempo marking vivace.

Familiar Homer characteristics in the treatment of both the solo line and the harmonic structure may be found even in this simple setting of a child's poem. The unfinished effect produced by ending the last phrase on some tone other than tonic, a device often chosen by the composer for the voice line, is also found in this song. At the end of each

verse, the solo ends on the supertonic, and the accompaniment continues to the tonic, at which point the next verse begins. The final cadence is also treated in this manner, and it is with some surprise that the listener finds the piece has ended, since the effect of the continuing motion of a canon or round has already been established.

The melody exceeds an octave by only one note. Its pattern is derived from the opening phrase:

Ex. 35.--"In the Meadow--What in the Meadow?," opening measures.

Vivace
mf with delicacy and sentiment

The musical score is for a piece in D major (one sharp) and common time (C). It consists of a vocal melody and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line is written on a single staff and begins with the lyrics "In the mea-dow, what in the mea-dow?". The melody is characterized by a simple, childlike pattern that exceeds an octave by only one note. The piano accompaniment is written for a grand piano (treble and bass staves) and features a harmonic construction of simple chords, often using a major second interval. The tempo is marked "Vivace" and the dynamic is "mf with delicacy and sentiment".

In the mea-dow, what in the mea-dow?

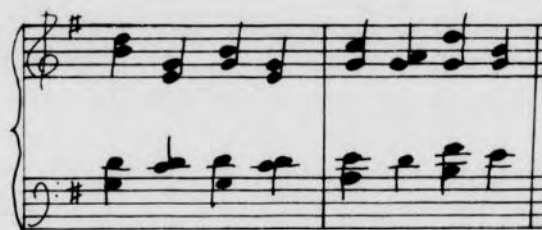
mf

The harmonic construction is simple and in traditional style with interest added by the capricious use of a foreign tone in subdominant and dominant harmonies in the accompaniment. The frequent use of this dissonant interval of a major second gives a pleasing effect against the singing, childlike melody (see ex. 36).

The ending, a repetition by the piano of the last vocal phrase, is one frequently found in Homer songs, pro-

ducing a sense of finality that is both graceful and appropriate.

Ex. 36.--"In the Meadow--What in the Meadow?," measures 11-12.



Homer turned to the Mother Goose verses, he wrote in the Preface of the little book of these songs, as a result of a frequently repeated request from his wife for some songs that the whole family could sing together.¹ The songs are written with disarming simplicity, and they bring a smile and a chuckle at the appropriateness of the musical settings to the solemn humor of these age-old verses. The Mother Goose Songs offer rich rewards in the matching of the child's inflections with musical line and rhythm.

In "Little Boy Blue" is found a song of pure sentiment. The melody is a tender, wistful tune, as sleepy and warm as the little boy himself (see ex. 37).

A bell tolls both in the accompaniment and solo line of "Ding, Dong, Bell," and it continues ringing throughout

¹Teachers of primary children would do well to examine these little songs. They are of real musical worth, and are attractive to children and adults alike.

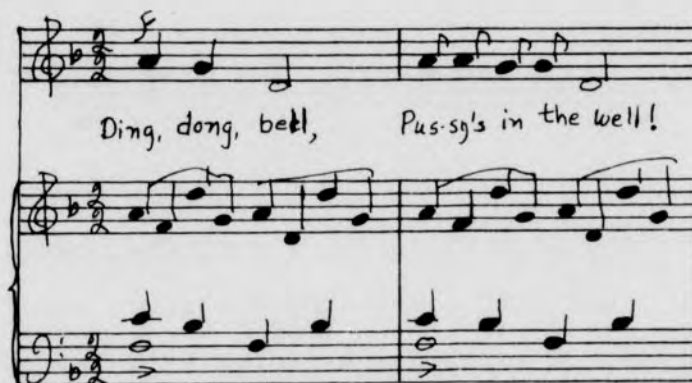
the setting of the story of the near tragedy for Pussy (see ex. 38).

Ex. 37.--"Little Boy Blue," measures 5-7.



Will you a-wake him? No, not I; For if I do, he'll be sure to cry, he'll be sure to cry.

Ex. 38.--"Ding, Dong, Bell," measures 2-3



Ding, dong, bell, Pus-sy's in the well!

One of the cleverest response songs which would delight younger children is "I Went' Up One Pair of Stairs." It is interesting to note that the meter of this little tune is $\frac{5}{4}$, for even with these verses meant for children, Homer did not try to fit the words into a regular meter, commonly

thought to be easier for children to feel. Instead, the response, "Just like me!" is put in at precisely the right moment and the phrase is kept intact. Not a child misses the regular pulse.

Ex. 39.--"I Went Up One Pair of Stairs," opening measures.

Andante con moto.

The musical score is for a song in 5/4 time, key of B-flat major. It consists of three systems of staves. The first system has a vocal line and a piano accompaniment. The vocal line starts with a melody in the right hand, followed by a rest, then continues. The piano accompaniment has a bass line and a right hand with chords. The second system continues the vocal melody and piano accompaniment. The third system shows the vocal line with a rest, followed by a melody in the right hand, and the piano accompaniment with chords. The tempo is marked 'Andante con moto' and the dynamics are 'mf'.

mf

I went up one pair of stairs. I went up two pairs of stairs

Just like me. Just like me.

Homer reveals his distinctive harmonic vocabulary even in these songs for children. "The North Wind Doth Blow" employs a plaintive melody which makes a prominent use of the Neapolitan chord throughout the first section (see ex. 40).

Children of all ages would enjoy the angular harmony of "There Was a Crooked Man," the solemn sound of old "Solomon Grundy," and the appropriate jumping melody in "Little Miss Muffet," suggesting the leap of the young lady herself when the spider is spied.

Ex. 40.--"The North Wind Doth Blow," opening measures.

Andante

The North Wind doth blow, And

mf legato

This musical score is for the opening measures of 'The North Wind Doth Blow'. It is written for voice and piano. The tempo is marked 'Andante'. The key signature has one flat (B-flat), and the time signature is 3/4. The voice part consists of two staves. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The second staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The second staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one flat. The piano part is marked 'mf' (mezzo-forte) and 'legato'. The lyrics are 'The North Wind doth blow, And'.

Many of the Mother Goose Songs are usable not only for children but also could be used effectively in concert. One such work is "I Love Six-pence, Pretty Little Six-pence," a gay running tune with sprightliness and buoyancy in all its measures. It builds to a quite brilliant ending which would certainly be appealing to an audience.

Ex. 41.--"I Love Six-pence, Pretty Little Six-pence," closing measures.

I love nothing better than my wife — than my

rit.

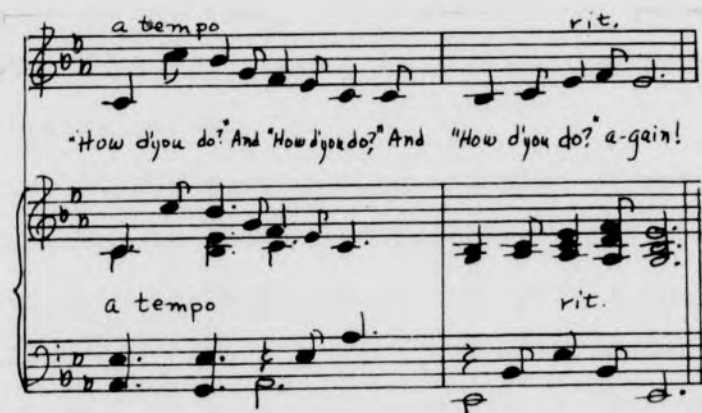
rit.

This musical score is for the closing measures of 'I Love Six-pence, Pretty Little Six-pence'. It is written for voice and piano. The key signature has one sharp (F-sharp), and the time signature is 3/4. The voice part consists of two staves. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The second staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp. The piano accompaniment consists of two staves. The first staff has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. The second staff has a bass clef and a key signature of one sharp. The piano part is marked 'rit.' (ritardando). The lyrics are 'I love nothing better than my wife — than my'.



There is real beauty in the gracefully polite "One Misty, Moisty Morning," which has a melody that bends and bobs as gracefully as the heads of the little child and her polite acquaintance:

Ex. 42.--"One Misty, Moisty Morning," measures 7-8.



The charm and one of the outstanding characteristics of these little songs is the disarming way in which Homer follows musically the descriptive bent of the words. Herein lies their special attractiveness for young children and their value for music educators. It should be noted that

in the following example of "See-Saw, Sacradown," the melody lifts when the foot is up and drops when the foot is down.

Ex. 43.--"See-Saw, Sacradown," measures 5-6.

One foot up and the oth-er down, And

rit.

Never in these songs is the child betrayed by an inappropriate setting of the text. Rhythmically and melodically these tunes never prove unfaithful to a proper concept of rhythm or descriptive melody.

One of the most amusing examples of such a descriptive melodic concept is found in "There Was a Little Man." The little gun with bullets made of lead pops throughout the song, and children can have a try at real dissonance, so appropriately cast that it seems the most natural harmonization possible.

Homer's vivid musical imagination is revealed in every tune. For example, in "Hickory, Dickory Dock," the frightened mouse scurries down a whole tone scale in the attempt to avoid being struck by the clock, but after his frantic escape,

he marches back into a major scale pattern, triumphantly.

Ex. 44.--"Hickory, Dickory Dock," measures 3-6.

clock struck one, The mouse ran down, Hick-o-ry, dick-o-ry.

dock.

rit.

For music teachers who have often deplored the unimaginative settings of these rhymes which small children love, these songs offer opportunity to present fine music linked to already loved words. These tunes will linger in the memory, becoming a part of the very real, make-believe world of children.

The Mother Goose Songs are perhaps more elemental, at least harmonically, than the Sing-Song verses, and are vigor-

ous where the others are tender. The two sets of children's songs show the wide range of musical ideas of their composer. Both are children's music at its finest, and music educators, as well as performing artists would do well to include them in their repertoires. Sidney Homer sang a fine song for children; he knew children and loved them if one were to judge from the musical evidence.

Three of Robert Louis Stevenson's poems from A Child's Garden of Verses should also be included in any discussion of Homer's songs for children. These three songs, found in Op. 16, are "Pirate Story," "Young Night Thought," and "Singing." All three achieve the essential mood of the loved verses.

"Young Night Thought" is an especially appealing one. This setting of a child's last reminiscences before sleep of the exciting caravan of people in his sometimes real, sometimes make-believe world, is given a happily simple harmonic setting. The gentle suggestion of a march in the first four measures sets the mood of the piece (see ex. 45). The song never leaves the original key of G major, and the repetitious character of the melody is exactly right for the tune sung by a child nearly asleep.

"A Pirate Story" and "Singing" complete this group. "Singing" moves with delicacy. It is a tender, fresh tune, filled with a light fancy, and supported by graceful arpeggio accompaniment. Harmonic color is enriched by use of the Neapolitan chord. "A Pirate Story" was described by Thorpe

as the best of Homer's songs for children:

Inspiration's rosiest smile was beaming on the composer when he fashioned this song. It seems almost to epitomize Mr. Homer's art: here are, for instance, full and free expression of his sure dramatic sense within a structure that is completely satisfying musically. The strong, melodious bass is here, the Homer distribution of voices, the vigorous rhythm; moreover, an expansive, organic vocal line, traced on a ground of skillfully managed harmonic color, grateful alike to singer and hearer, imparts a sense of focus and direction.¹

Ex. 45.--"Young Night Thought," opening measures.

pp

All night long and ev'ry night, When my ma-ma puts out the light, I

pp

see the people march-ing by, As plain as day be-fore my eye.

¹Thorpe, op. cit., p. 58.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSIONS

The medium of song was a most natural choice of Homer for his musical inspiration. Trained as a pianist, and married to one of America's finest singers, he gave to song his greatest gifts. A study of his songs reveals certain distinctive qualities which distinguish their composer in this field. These qualities can be singled out and explored, and often the resulting analysis helps explain the beauty of Homer's songs, but, as always in the world of art, the essence of beauty is apt to defy analysis. Melody, rhythm, and harmony, the techniques of a composer's craft, can be identified by certain traits revealed, but the whole composition remains greater than the sum of its component parts. This achievement remains the secret of its creator.

The outstanding clue to Homer's style is the artistic organization of all parts into a whole. His songs are entities; melody and accompaniment cannot be conceived separately. The songs are pieces for voice and accompaniment. In fact, in many of his songs, the piano often assumes a major role in rounding out the thought and mood of the song. As an example, in "The Country of the Camisards," it is the piano which brings the piece back to tonic harmony, and it is the accompaniment which finally rounds out the last phrase of the song.

The pattern of Homer songs is that of an interweaving between voice and piano, rather than one dominating the other.

In his treatment of text, Homer was completely subjective. It was not enough that the music fit the words of the song rhythmically. Homer, instead, sought the setting which would express the inmost meaning of the text. Felix Deyo commented upon this, writing, " . . . there is a noticeable balance and interrelationship between the character of his melody and text."¹ Sometimes sentimental and romantic, sometimes hearty and fun-loving, sometimes contemplative and introspective, the melodic line and accompaniment at all times both strive for the perfect fusion of poetic and musical mood. His success in this endeavor was attested to by Deyo, who wrote:

The Homer muse strikes straight at the heart of the mood of its theme. Humor, romance, passion, grief, exultation, irony, defiance, fancy, longing, tenderness, gaiety, fury, innocence, all are delineated with unerring accuracy. The portrayal of each is successful.²

An important clue to the character of a song writer is to be found in the poems he sets to music. It has been cited by Thorpe, Deyo, and others that Homer was unique in his generation in his choice of texts. The inconsequential rhymes which attracted many of his contemporaries offered no inspiration to him; instead, he turned to the works of recognized masters of English and American poetry. The poetic

¹Felix Deyo, "The Neglected Songs of an American Composer," International Lyric Courier, July, 1949, p. 6.

²Ibid.

range of his choices was wide, and the resulting diversified character of his compositions is one of the outstanding characteristics of Homer's work.

Homer seemed attracted most frequently to two basic forms--strophic form and a multi-section form of two basic parts, each of which stands in contrast to the other. For his songs of humor and for his more contemplative, introspective poems, he seemed most often to choose a strophic form. It is almost never, however, exactly strophic. Modification of the basic form, sometimes found in the piano accompaniment, often in the treatment of the final phrase, robs the analyst of a simple generalization on this point. In "The Country of the Camisards," departure from the form is found in the ending phrase. "In the Meadow--What in the Meadow?" adds an extra measure to the second verse. "The Unforgotten" changes the melodic line slightly in each final phrase of the three verses. In the well-known "Requiem," however, and in "When Death to Either Shall Come," to cite but two examples, the basic strophic form is not altered.

In Homer's dramatic songs and songs of intense, sharply defined mood, the A B A B or A B A forms are almost invariably found. Outstanding examples are "How's My Boy?," "Sing Me a Song of a Lad That is Gone," and "Michael Robartes Bids His Beloved be at Peace." Here again, it should be emphasized that the text dictated the form. Homer was attracted with equal fervor to tense, dramatic poems, mood pieces, and to gay, joyous verses. These, of necessity, called for use

of a variety of forms.

Although the two forms mentioned are perhaps the ones most frequently employed by Homer, he demonstrated a frequent preference for and marked ability with the through-composed song. "The Sick Rose" is an excellent example of this artistic technique.

Homer's melodies are, for the most part, diatonic. In intensely emotional phrases, however, chromaticism invariably occurs. In the strong dramatic phrases of "How's My Boy?" and "The Pauper's Drive" the melodic line assumes such chromatic tendencies. The possibilities of the pentatonic scale were also given beautiful expression in "Mary's Baby" and "Way Down South." However, diatonicism is the prevailing melodic concept in the majority of his compositions.

His melodic lines are generally warm, natural, and spontaneous. Although unexpected melodic intervals frequently occur, the over-all smoothness of the melodic concept is seldom broken. His voice lines tend to have a compass directed by the mood of the poem. In his shorter, more compact texts, the range is often small, usually encompassing but an octave. His dramatic songs, however, use all the voice, high and low.

In almost all of his music, Homer demands a firmly sustained legato line, and his phrases tend to be long. Mrs. Richard Sias, studio accompanist for Madame Homer, wrote of Homer's insistence upon the unbroken phrase:

Madame Homer insisted that her students could not always observe the "breath marks," or rather, the lack of them,

in these songs. It was the only thing I ever heard her fuss at him about. "But Sid, she just cannot sing that phrase in one breath! He always answered, "Of course she can, Lou." And in fairness to both of them, sometimes "she" did, and sometimes "she" did not (or "he," as the case was).¹

She continued, saying,

His rests are few and far between, and if the singer holds on to the notes at the ends of the phrases for their full value there is very little room for breathing. Dr. Homer himself was a pianist, not a singer, and instrumentalists never seem to have quite as much sympathy with the singer's need for breath as composers who are also singers.²

The melodic lines in Homer's songs show strong sequential tendencies. In the heightening process toward the climaxes, it is often by sequence that the high emotional point of the song is reached. At the top, the line generally curves back, and a favorite Homer ending is a repetition of the first motive, sometimes in the voice, and sometimes in the accompaniment.

Homer's songs show the keen awareness of their composer of poetic rhythm, motion and rhythm always being derived from the verse. Thus changes of meter, necessary to preserve the pulse of the text, abound in his music. In "The Song of the Shirt," for example, there are twenty-four changes of meter in the ninety-one measures, ranging from common meter to the quite unusual ¹⁸. Yet the vocal line moves with undisturbed smoothness. Though his rhythmic concepts show great flexibility and freedom, they are seldom eccentric or

¹Letter from Mrs. Richard Sias.

²Ibid.

astounding. Deyo commented on this aspect of Homer's style, saying, "His understanding of rhythmic values is keenly developed."¹ Poetry has seldom had a more ingenious craftsman to fashion sympathetic musical frames for its rhythmic variations than Sidney Homer.

Along with his intense interest in using meter and rhythm to enhance the poetic phrase there was also a marked attention to tempo by Homer. Mrs. Sias wrote of this:

In 1952 he decided that all of his songs needed tempo marks which could not be doubted. Andante, Lento, and all the other Italian marks of tempo are interpreted differently by different musicians and Dr. Homer wanted the world to know exactly how he wanted his songs to be sung. Consequently he decided that metronome markings would be the answer. This meant going over all his songs.²

The result of their work was a complete listing of metronome markings for all of his songs, with any changes of tempo in the course of a single song indicated by the measure number or word and the changed tempo.³ This work was completed in the year before his death.

The most important key to the Homer idiom is perhaps found in his use of harmony. A master of harmonic technique, Homer poured into his songs a harmonic vocabulary that was as extensive as it was varied. He had a keen sense of color, and his music is stamped with harmonic color devices: borrowed and altered harmonies, chords of the augmented sixth,

¹Deyo, op. cit., p. 6.

²Letter from Mrs. Richard Sias.

³See Appendix, p. 127.

the Neapolitan chord, secondary dominants, foreign and dissonant tones, and chords of the seventh and ninth. The traditional progression of chords was frequently violated by Homer, but in spite of these apparent violations of traditional harmonic practice, he had a strong traditional conscience, and there is always logic in his digressions. Samuel Barber, writing of this aspect of Homer's work, said:

Throughout his life a sturdy New England self-reliance balanced his respect for European tradition. These two characteristics, successfully blended, have produced his best songs. By maintaining such an equilibrium he avoided the fate of some of his talented contemporaries, who tipped the scales too far to one side or the other and became either provincial amateurs, with a tang that often becomes too salty, or eclectics far too sensitive to the latest musical fashions from abroad.¹

Homer preferred full sonorities to the more delicate, open chords. At times, his harmonies become almost lush, as in "Sing to Me, Sing." Much use of dominant seventh harmony is found in his work, yet he could conceive a harmonic background almost austere, as in "The Country of the Camisards," or delicate, as in "Mary's Baby." His harmonic concepts were truly multifarious. Felix Deyo wrote:

His fund of harmonic tone-color is at all times equal to the fluctuating changes of mood encountered in modern poetic literature. There are, moreover, chords and modulations in these songs that are stamped with wonderful beauty and agreeable ingenuity. Nor would the potency of their effect be so striking, did their employment emanate from premeditated theoretical calculation. The music of Sidney Homer never lapses in this respect. It is always spontaneous. It never conveys the unsatisfactory impression of self-consciousness. So thoroughly insured is the composer in the techniques of his craft, that

¹Barber, Preface to Seventeen Songs by Sidney Homer.

they have become a subconscious force, always available but never unduly conspicuous.¹

In the Homer songs, modulation was used extensively in emotional development. Favorite modulatory paths seemed to be by way of the Neapolitan chord, by enharmonic respelling of chords, by sequence, and by borrowed harmonies. He was not too traditional, however, to occasionally use abrupt, unprepared modulations, made logical by repetition or dynamic contrast. Such a modulation can be found in "The Pauper's Drive."²

However ingenious the harmonic, rhythmic, and melodic techniques of Homer, he did not compose in a calculating fashion. His genius lay in using his craft in so expert a fashion that his musical expression always rises above the devices used to produce it.

Sidney Homer's work is infused with an unmistakable sincerity of purpose and perfection of technical workmanship that command respect and admiration. . . . So original, interesting, and excellent the result of his creative impulse, that the name of the composer should be recorded in the future history of American music as that of a singularly distinguished talent.³

Homer represents the last generation of a group of American composers to which Gilbert Chase, in his book, America's Music, has referred to as the "Boston Classicists." This group included, among others, George Chadwick, one of Homer's early teachers. In Chase's estimate of the contri-

¹Deyo, op. cit., p. 6.

²See p. 44.

³Deyo, op. cit., p. 6.

bution of this group of New England composers, he said:

In summing up the achievements of the Boston Classicists, we may say that they gave to the American composer a professional dignity, a social and artistic prestige, and a degree of recognition both at home and abroad, such as he had not previously enjoyed. In a sense their mission was . . . the affirmation of idealism combined with technical discipline.¹

William Treat Upton, in writing of the influence of Chadwick and Arthur Foote on American song, said:

It is to the personality and musicianship of these two men that we owe the giving to our native song a status comparable with that of other lands and times. . . . Admirable alike in spirit and workmanship, these songs have served as a firm foundation on which to build; and however much our present-day song or that of the future may differ from these in type and style, we shall always look back to them as the beginning of real artistry in American song.²

Thus, while Sidney Homer cannot be credited with any new or startling innovations in the art song, he does occupy an important position in the evolution of its development in America. He chose to use his considerable talents in furthering the artistic excellence and prestige of the American song through development and enrichment of the techniques pioneered by Chadwick and Foote. These two men, credited as being the pioneers in building respect for our native composers, were criticized by Upton and Chase as " . . . lagging sometimes in inspiration."³ This indictment could not be pronounced

¹Gilbert Chase, America's Music (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc., 1955), p. 381.

²William Treat Upton, Art Song in America (Boston: Oliver Ditson Company, 1930), p. 113.

³Op. cit., p. 112.

upon Homer. Spontaneity, perhaps the most direct evidence of inspiration, has been cited by Barber, Deyo, Thorpe, and other critics, as the predominating characteristic of the work of Sidney Homer.

Homer, in the whole aspect of the history of the American art song, takes his place as a skilled craftsman who contributed his excellent talents to the perfecting of the form, and as an able builder who provided an example of excellence for the next generation of composers. His many excellent songs give evidence of some of the characteristics of the past, in particular the influences of the German tradition, but, at the same time, pushing forward, show a vivid individuality and a welcome expansion of the existing techniques. His place as one of the major composers of truly American art songs will undoubtedly endure.

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- Day, Mrs. Eli. Letter to the author, September 15, 1962.
- Fryer, Katharine Homer. Letters to the author, January 14, 1963, March 14, 1963, March 29, 1963.
- Henry, Hester Homer. Letter to the author, August 8, 1962.
- Homer, Sidney, Jr. Letter to the author, March 18, 1963.
- Kellogg, Mrs. Waters. Letter to the author, October 9, 1962.
- Levine, Max. Letter to the author, September 15, 1962.
- Sias, Mrs. Richard. Letter to the author, September 12, 1962.

Miscellaneous

The following items were obtained from the Homer File, Archives, Mills Memorial Library, Rollins College, Winter Park, Florida.

Address delivered by Hamilton Holt, President, Rollins College, at the Golden Wedding Anniversary of Sidney and Louise Homer, January 9, 1945.

Dedicatory Address delivered by Hamilton Holt, President, Rollins College, on the occasion of the Honorary Degree Citation for Sidney Homer, March 1, 1939.

Presentation Address delivered by Hamilton Holt, President, Rollins College, for the Sullivan Medallion to Louise Homer, February 24, 1947.

Printed Program: "Rollins College Presents an Evening of Music Honoring Sidney and Louise Homer on their Fiftieth Wedding Anniversary: The Annie Russell Theatre, Winter Park, Florida, January 10, 1945, at 8:15 o'clock."

"Religion by the Day," syndicated column by William T. Ellis, January, 1945.

APPENDIX A

Letter from Mrs. Robert E. Henry, Jr.

Sentinel Pines
Hague, New York
August 8, 1962

Dear Mrs. McDonald,

Thank you for your extremely interesting letter concerning your thesis about Daddy. It is most exciting to me that you are doing this and I would dearly love a copy. My address after Oct. 15 is 528 E. 17 Place, Vero Beach, Florida. I wish I could be of more help to you than I can, but my sister Kay Fryer is the one who knows everything--was closest to Daddy in a musical way and kept voluminous diaries--so I am going to send your letter on to her in case she hasn't received one from you. Mrs. Douglas Fryer, 147 West 4th St., New York City.

Daddy was indeed in frail health often, but being a kid I didn't think too much about it. I realize now, though, that it must have been a terrific strain on Mother. His great love of people--all people--and interest in them never flagged, however. As an instance of this I remember when he was recovering from his desperate illness in Gstaad, Switzerland, in the summer of 1928. We girls were over there and he was determined that we should have the fun of travelling a bit, so he planned to the last detail with great loving care a safe and fun trip for four unchaperoned young ladies, for a

week. The humorous (and safe) angle of this was that he would not let us go into Italian Switzerland for fear the men might not be respectful. I believe he thought they would be fanny-pinchers, though needless to say he never used the word!

He was a truly wonderful person and father and we all loved him dearly. Bear in mind that while he was the mainstay of Mother's career, she was the main-stay of him, and her strength and love sustained us all.

All best wishes and good luck on your thesis. I will look forward to seeing it!

Very sincerely,

Hester Homer Henry
(Mrs. Robert E. Henry, Jr.)

Letter from Mrs. Eli Day

Rollins College
Winter Park, Florida
August 27, 1962

Mills Memorial Library
Archives

Mrs. G. M. McDonald
2419 Wright Avenue
Greensboro, N. C.

Dear Mrs. McDonald:

.

I am enclosing a copy of the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Medallion award to Madame Homer, as you requested. I thought also you might find President Holt's address on the occasion of the Golden Wedding anniversary amusing, if a little corny, and so am enclosing a copy of it.

I have no idea in what papers Dr. Ellis' Day By Day column appeared. We have only a typed copy of the column including "Fifty Golden Years" which someone before our time must have made and placed in the Homer file, without noting source or date. It was apparently copied from a local paper. The copy enclosed is a duplicate of the one in our files.

Let me know if we can be of any further help. With all good wishes to you in the work on your thesis, I am

Sincerely yours,

Julia L. Day
(Mrs. Eli Day)

Letter from Mrs. Eli Day

Rollins College
Winter Park, Florida
August 14, 1962

Mills Memorial Library
Archives

Mrs. G. M. McDonald
2419 Wright Avenue
Greensboro, N. C.

Dear Mrs. McDonald:

.
To give you an idea of what we have on Sidney Homer
I am enclosing an outline of the contents of his file. I am
also enclosing a copy of the citation you requested, which
you will notice is dated February 27, 1939.

I have not attempted to outline the contents of Mrs.
Homer's file because I believe most of it is unrelated to
your project. It contains some duplicates of materials in
her husband's folder, photographs, a few concert programs,
articles on her death from several newspapers, accounts of
the memorial service held for her at Rollins, and very little
correspondence.

The Homers came to Winter Park in 1939, where Madame
Homer opened a voice studio. In the year 1943-44 she gave
scholarships of free voice lessons to the two outstanding
women voice students at Rollins. From 1943 till her death

she was 'Honorary Adviser in Voice' at Rollins, and in 1947, just a little more than two months before her death, she was awarded the distinguished honor of the Algernon Sydney Sullivan Medallion. If you wish a copy of the citation on this occasion I will be glad to make one and send it to you.

I hope this information has been of a little help.

Sincerely yours,

Mrs. Eli Day
Assistant to Mrs. Draper

Letter from Mrs. Richard Sias

420 Alberta Drive
Winter Park, Florida
September 12, 1962

Dear Mrs. McDonald,

Thank you for your letter. I am happy to help in any way that I can.

Not knowing exactly what you want perhaps I should just talk about Dr. Homer, and then you may pick and choose.

My first meeting was early in 1938 when I came to St. Augustine, Florida (from New York) to become accompanist for Madame Homer in her studio. I auditioned for the position with Madame Homer's niece, Sara Barber, who was then in New York, and arrived in Florida without having known either of the Homers. Immediately I was plunged into rehearsal for a program to be given very shortly in the Ponce de Leon Hotel to celebrate the publication of Dr. Homer's book, "My Wife and I," by the MacMillan Co. in New York. I worked with Madame Homer and her students who were to sing several of Dr. Homer's songs. We worked hard. But not nearly as hard as I had to work with Dr. Homer himself. He wanted every dynamic marking, and every tempo change most accurately observed. He was most patient. In fact, that is one of the qualities I remember most vividly about him. He would go over the same things again and again, always gentle, and always kind. And

the reward was always forthcoming in his praise and appreciation for every effort. He never seemed to tire of hearing his songs, and always seemed grateful when the students asked him for help. Madame Homer insisted that her students could not always observe the "breath marks," or rather, the lack of them in these songs. It was the only thing I ever heard her fuss at him about. "But Sid, she just cannot sing that phrase in one breath!" He always answered, "Of course she can, Lou." And in fairness to both of them sometimes 'she' did, and sometimes 'she' did not.' (or 'he', as the case was). In your own study of these songs I am sure you will see what she meant. His rests are few and far between, and if the singer holds on to the notes at the ends of the phrases for their full value there is very little room for breathing. Dr. Homer himself was a pianist, not a singer, and instrumentalists never seem to have quite as much sympathy with the singer's need for breath as composers who are also singers. (my own opinion).

The "coming-out" party for the book was a great success. I assume that you know of the book and have read it. If not then I strongly recommend it. I know of no better way to become acquainted with Dr. Homer. He wrote exactly as he spoke, and he spoke exactly as he wrote, with a gentle manner, and a smile on his face and in his voice. By re-reading his book I can recall the sound of his voice, and see again his bright eyes regarding me as I played for him.

In 1952 he decided that all of his songs needed tempo

marks which could not be doubted. "Andante," "Allegro," "Lento," and all the other Italian marks of tempo are interpreted differently by different musicians and Dr. Homer wanted the world to know exactly how he wanted his songs to be sung. Consequently he decided that metronome markings would be the answer. This meant going over all his songs. This involved me, and it was with great pleasure that I spent many, many hours playing his music for him. His eyesight was bad by this time, and he could no longer read the notes, so I became his eyes, and his fingers. He wanted to hear every single note of all his music, even his sonatas and quartets, and somehow I managed to play them for him, although you doubtless realize that it is quite a stunt to play from a quartet score in three clefs, in manuscript, and on four lines. In any case he was happy about it and so was I.

The enclosed sheets will show you the results of our work. I am happy to loan them to you, and hope you will return them when you have finished with them. The original typewritten sheets I sent to Dr. Homer's nephew, Samuel Barber, who lives in Mt. Kisco, N. Y. I never knew exactly what was to happen to them, but I assumed that if the songs were republished the new markings would be on them. In any case here they are. Of course you understand that unless otherwise marked the unit of measure is a quarter note to the beat.

The order of the listing of the songs was his idea, and the numbering, but I do not know whether they were composed in that order or not. Perhaps you do.

The other enclosure I do not know very much about except that Dr. Homer gave me a manuscript of the song and asked me to copy it for him for publication. This was in 1949. I don't know who had the copies printed, but I still feel a sense of surprise when I see my own manuscript and printing. I am sure you will agree that it is a most charming little song. I have another copy and if you like you may keep this one. If you do not have any use for it I would be glad to have it back. I do not recall that he said anything about when he wrote it, but since he calls it Opus 3 he presumably wrote it years before.

.....

When Dr. Homer died I accompanied his body to Lake George, N. Y. and after the funeral services four of his grand-daughters (children of Kay Homer Fryer) performed the second movement of his last quartet for strings in the home of his daughter Louise Homer Stires. The girls are accomplished musicians and the performance was most moving and unaffected. It is beautiful music, and it was played as I know Dr. Homer must have heard it when he wrote it.

.....

After two winters in St. Augustine the Homers came to Winter Park and Rollins College. I came with them, and met my husband the day after I arrived. I took time out from accompanying to get married and have four children, and then returned to the studio. I continued to play for Madame until she died, and after that I played for Dr. Homer as he reviewed

and corrected all his works. Does that cover it?

.....

Best of luck--I'll be glad to do any more if I can,
and do let me know what happens. I loved both the Homers
with all my heart.

Most sincerely,

Phyllis C. Sias

Letter from Max Levine

Boston Latin School Ass'n.
78 Avenue Louis Pasteur
Boston 15, Massachusetts
Sept. 15, 1962

Mrs. G. M. McDonald
2419 Wright Ave.
Greensboro, N. C.

Dear Mrs. McDonald,

Your letter inquiring about Sidney Homer and his Boston Latin School connections came to the school after the closing for the two-months' vacation. I received the letter and worked on the details at times in the summer and now that the records have been unlocked and ready, I have some leads for you. I have used our 1635 and up-to-date material of one volume, the 100-year volume, and the single catalogues from 1875 on. I found Sidney Homer's name three times. He entered the B. L. S. Sept. 2, 1879. It is all written out in long hand in a big record book we have. His father was George Homer. He came in from the Rice School, an elementary school nearby. I have often seen the school before it was torn down. Our B. L. S. was on Warren Ave., but has gone. . . . The Homer family lived at 27 Appleton St. Sidney was 14 years 9 months at his entrance. The boy entered A II, the first year of the School. There were 104 boys in his class, among them William P. Henderson, later head of French Dept., whom I succeeded twenty-five years ago, John Francis Fitzgerald, the

father-in-law of Joseph Kennedy, who was my classmate, and
grandfather of President John Kennedy. . . .

Cordially,

Max Levine, '07
Alumni Secretary
Boston Latin School
Boston 15, Mass.

Letter from Samuel Barber

Capricorn
Mount Kisco, New York
September 19, 1962

Dear Mrs. McDonald,

Although I am as much an admirer of Mr. Homer's songs as ever, I do not at present have anything to add to the preface I wrote for the COLLECTED SONGS.

Best wishes for your thesis.

Very sincerely yours,

Samuel Barber

Letter from Mrs. Waters Kellogg

Dept. of Archives
Phillips Academy
Andover, Massachusetts
October 9, 1962

Mrs. G. M. McDonald
2419 Wright Ave.
Greensboro, North Carolina

Dear Mrs. McDonald:

Your letter to Mrs. Peterson of the Alumni Office has been referred to me.

Unfortunately all the early records of a student's attendance and marks have been destroyed. However from printed catalogues etc. I have been able to unearth some facts for you about Sidney Homer. I wish it could be more.

He attended Phillips Academy for only one year 1880-1881 as a member of the Preparatory class, the lowest of four classes or the equivalent to a freshman now-a-days. He lived in the Latin Commons as he was in the Classical Department and not the English department of the Academy. He was Vice-President of his class for the Winter Term that year. He joined the Philomatheon Society which is a Debating Society still very much in existence. He played the banjo in the "Phillips Spanish Students," a group of five with two playing the guitar and three the banjo. Other musical groups in the Academy at the time of which he was not a member included the Glee Club, the Phillips Quartette, the Chapel Choir, and

the Italian Warblers. Sometimes it is interesting to note the possibilities which were open to a student and not taken up.

With regrets that we have no more information for you and with best wishes for the success of your biography, I am,

Sincerely yours,

Juliet R. Kellogg
(Mrs. Waters Kellogg)
Assoc. Archivist

Letter from Mrs. Douglas Fryer

147 West 4th Street
New York, 12, New York
January 23, 1963

Dear Mrs. McDonald--

.

You might be interested to know that the "Trost der Nacht" was written while Father was a student under Rheinberger. Mother loved the melody and as he had lost the manuscript she urged him over the years to try to recall it and write it again. It was not until 1946--a year before her death--that he finally made the attempt. He couldn't use his eyes to write then so he dictated it to her.

I understand you have the Thorpe article. The other article I mentioned is not of great importance but I am enclosing it since I mentioned it.

My father happened to see it when it came out. Perhaps someone sent it to him--I forget. I was there and I remember his delight--not only in the article and the fact that someone had been interested enough to write it--but at being referred to as "deceased." He immediately wrote Mr. Deyo to thank him and assure him he was still very much alive, as indeed he was. He never grew old in mind or spirit.

Now--recently--in going through my father's old press clippings, I came across an old copy of the G. Schirmer

"Course in Contemporary Music Biography" devoted to my father. It is a small booklet with his picture on the cover. Inside is a brief biography--a list of songs ending with "A Woman's Last Word" and the same article by Felix Deyo. Almost identical. It was written around 1918, I should judge. Mr. Deyo did say he was "recapitulating his critical impressions." I guess my father had forgotten about it having come out before.

.....

Sincerely,
Katharine Fryer

Letter from Mrs. Douglas Fryer

147 West 4th St.
New York 12, New York
March 29, 1963

Dear Mrs. McDonald,

.....
Actually, being freed of the burden of teaching made it possible for him to compose. My mother used to say that one of the reasons she agreed to his giving up his class to take her to France to study was so that he could give up his teaching and have time to compose. She was aware of his exceptional gift and she saw how his teaching drained and exhausted him. She liked to think that the change in their lives had benefited him too and I believe she was right.

Actually, I served as my mother's accompanist from the spring of 1927 to the fall of 1931. We toured for three seasons. It was only the first tour that my father toured with us and therefore it was the one he remembered when he wrote his book. I never pointed out this error to him as it didn't seem important enough--nor does it now--but for the sake of accuracy I am bringing it up.

.....
Did you know that my father planned to return to Germany and study with Brahms when his father's death decided him to remain in Boston and send his mother and sister abroad

instead?

.....

I am glad you plan to cover more fully my father's
emphasis on his big works.

I shall look forward to reading your thesis in its
completed form. Good luck.

Sincerely,

Kay Fryer

P. S. I am sending the chapter and chamber music separately.

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APPENDIX B

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SONGS BY SIDNEY HOMER

<u>Opus</u>	<u>Title and Author</u>
3	Trost der Nacht (Carl J. P. Spitta)
5-1	Der Kosak (Bohemian)
5-2	The Lost Shepherd (Bohemian)
5-3	The Scribe (Bohemian)
5-4	The Youth's Departure to War (Slavic)
6-1	Break, Break, Break (Tennyson)
6-2	Crossing the Bar (Tennyson)
7-1	Sweet and Low (Tennyson)
7-2	Thy Voice Is Heard (Tennyson)
7-3	Home They Brought Her Warrior Dead (Tennyson)
8-1	The City Child (Tennyson)
8-2	Minnie and Winnie (Tennyson)
9-1	Enid's Song (Tennyson)
10-1	It Was the Time of Roses (Thomas Hood)
10-2	Autumn (Thomas Hood)
10-3	A Lake and a Fairy Boat (Thomas Hood)
11-1	Daybreak (Longfellow)
11-2	Baby's Outing (Corley)
12-1	My Star (Browning)
12-2	A Woman's Last Word (Browning)
12-3	Prospice (Browning)
13	The Poor Man's Song (Anon.)
14-1	The Last Leaf (Holmes)

- 15-1 Sing Me a Song of the Lad that is Gone (Stevenson)
15-2 Requiem (Stevenson)
15-3 The Unforgotten (Stevenson)
15-4 The Stormy Evening (Stevenson)
15-5 The Country of the Camisards (Stevenson)
15-6 Evensong (Stevenson)
16-1 Pirate Story (Stevenson)
16-2 Young Night Thought (Stevenson)
16-3 Singing (Stevenson)
17-1 How's My Boy? (Dobell)
17-2 From the Brake the Nightingale (Henley)
17-3 Michael Robartes Bids His Beloved be at Peace (Yeats)
17-4 To Russia (Miller)
18-1 When Windflowers Blossom on the Sea (Rossetti)
18-2 The Sick Child (Stevenson)
18-3 The Pauper's Drive (Noel)
19 Seventeen Lyrics from Sing Song (Rossetti)
20 The Fiddler of Dooney (Yeats)
21-1 The Eternal Goodness (Whittier)
21-2 There's Heaven Above (Browning)
22-1 Mammy's Lullaby (Howard Weeden)
22-2 Uncle Rome (Howard Weeden)
22-3 A Plantation Hymn (Howard Weeden)
22-4 A Banjo Song (Howard Weeden)
22-5 Two Lovers and Lizette (Howard Weeden)
23-1 April, April (Watson)
23-3 Ferry Me Across the Water (Rossetti)

- 24 Dearest (Henley)
- 25 The Song of the Shirt (Hood)
- 26-1 The Sick Rose (Blake)
- 26-2 The Infant Sorrow (Blake)
- 27-1 'Way Down South (Weeden)
- 27-2 The Song of the Watcher (Weeden)
- 27-3 When the Angels Call (Weeden)
- 27-4 Long Ago (Weeden)
- 27-5 At Last (Weeden)
- 27-6 Old Watt and the Rabbits (Weeden)
- 28 Sing to Me, Sing (Henley)
- 29-1 Babylon the Great (Rossetti)
- 31 Sheep and Lambs (Katharine Tynan Hinkson)
- 32 The Battle of Blenheim (Southey)
- 33-1 Dinna Ask Me (Dunlop)
- 33-2 Auld Daddy Darkness (Fergusson)
- 33-3 Cuddle Doon (Anderson)
- 34-1 The King of the Fairy Men (Stephens)
- 34-2 When Death to Either Shall Come (Bridges)
- 34-3 Mary's Baby (McLeod)
- 34-4 Lone Dog (McLeod)
- 35 Homeland (Sidney Homer)
- 36 Mother Goose
- 37-1 Specially Jim (Morgan)
- 37-2 An Idaho Ball (Anon.)
- 37-3 Casey at the Bat (Thayer)
- 37-4 A Plantation Ditty (Stanton)

- 37-5 The Height of the Ridiculous (Holmes)
37-6 Christmas Chimes (Anon.)
38 General William Booth Enters Into Heaven (Lindsay)
42 The Everlasting Mercy (Masefield)
43 The Lay of the Laborer (Hood)
Resolved (School Song) (Sidney Homer)
The Widow in the Bye Street (Masefield)

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Instrumental Works by Sidney Homer (Published)

<u>Opus</u>	<u>Title</u>
39	Sonata in one movement for organ
40	Introduction and Fugue for organ
50	Twenty Little Pieces for piano
52	School Days (children's piano pieces)
	Vacation Days (children's piano pieces)

Instrumental Works (Not Published--Available in Photo Offset)

62	Quartet for Two Violins, Viola, Cello
63	Sonata (Piano, Violin)
64	Trio (Piano, Violin, Cello)
65	Sonata (Piano, Violin)
	Quintet

63

Metronome Markings for Songs by Sidney Homer¹
 The quarter note is the unit of measure
 unless otherwise indicated.

Title	Metronome Marking
Break, Break	60
3/4	66
Crossing the Bar	56
Sweet and Low	58
Thy Voice is Heard	63
Home They Brought	56
The City Child	176
Minnie and Winnie	104
Enid's Song	100
A Lake and a Fairy Boat	116
Autumn	96
It Was the Time of Roses	52
Baby's Outing	66
Daybreak	112
Last Leaf	63
Poor Man's Song	$\text{♩} = 72$
A Woman's Last Word	60
My Star	88
Prospice	108
Sing Me a Song	$\text{♩} = 72$

¹The songs are listed here in the order as given by the composer, June, 1952. (See p.109).

Requiem	46
The Unforgotten	76
Stormy Evening (opening measure)	66
2nd measure on	108
<u>meno mosso</u> 18th measure	66
Country of the Camisards	63
Evensong	60
Pirate Story	100
Young Night Thought	69
Singing	84
How's My Boy?	80
From the Brake the Nightingale	58
Michael Robartes	
<u>Allegro non troppo</u>	J. = 66
<u>Tranquillo</u>	50
To Russia	66
When Windflowers Blossom	
<u>Allegro moderato maestoso</u>	96
<u>Lento</u>	54
The Sick Child	
<u>Andante</u>	66
<u>"fear not"--lento</u>	56
Pauper's Drive	
<u>Allegro</u>	76
Fiddler of Dooney	112
Eternal Goodness	72
There's Heaven Above	72
Mammy's Lullaby	
<u>Moderato</u>	42
Uncle Rome	66
Plantation Hymn	60
3rd note from end is a <u>C</u>	
instead of a <u>D</u> .	

Dearest	50
Dinna Ask Me	76
Der Kosak <u>Allegro non troppo</u>	$\text{♩} = 96$
Lost Shepherd	72
Der Scheiber	92
Youth's Departure	84

Seventeen Lyrics--Part I

1. Eight O'clock	92
2. Baby Cry	100
3. Dead in the Cold	69
4. Love Me	66
5. Koo-koo-roo-koo	116
6. Boats Sail on the River	58
7. In the Meadow	$\text{♩} = 88$
8. The Dog Lies	116
9. Lie Abed	60
10. Mix a Pancake	108

Seventeen Lyrics--Part II

1. Who Has Seen the Wind?	$\text{♩} = 58$
2. Dancing on the Hill-top	$\text{♩} = 56$
3. A Pocket Handkerchief	120
4. A Motherless Soft Lambkin	60
5. Lullaby, Oh Lullaby	52
6. Hurt No Living Thing	104
7. Minnie and Winnie	$\text{♩} = 76$

Bandanna Ballads

Banjo Song	80
Two Lovers and Lizette	
Moderato	88
<u>Poco Animato</u>	104
April, April	84
Ferry Me Across the River	108
Song of the Shirt	
Andante	$\text{♩} = 68$
Allegro moderato ("Work, work")	108
A tempo ("Heap")	$\text{♩} = 108$
Andante con moto ("oh, but to breathe")	$\text{♩} = 72$
Adagio ("little weeping")	42
Adagio non troppo ("thread")	$\text{♩} = 56$

Song of the Shirt (cont.)	
<u>Andante quasi adagio</u> ("with fingers")	♩=60
<u>Allegro</u> ("shirt")	♩=120
Infant Sorrow	92
The Sick Rose	52
'Way Down South	54
Song of the Watcher	52
When the Angels Call	50
Long Ago	52
At Last	52
Old Watt and the Rabbits	108
Sing to Me, Sing	96
Babylon the Great	63
Sheep and Lambs	♩=69
(Choral arrangements are written with different time signatures--in these the metronome mark)	♩=69
The Battle of Blenheim	♩=112
Dinna Ask Me	92
Auld Daddy Darkness	76
Cuddle Doon	104
King of the Fairy Men	96
When Death to Either Shall Come	50
Mary's Baby	44
Lone Dog	♩=126
Homeland	52
Specially Jim	♩=80
An Idaho Ball	112
Casey at the Bat	56
<u>Allegretto</u>	50
<u>Andante</u>	♩=60
<u>Lento</u>	

Casey at the Bat (cont.) <u>Allegro</u>	69
Plantation Ditty	$\text{♩} = 60$
The Height of the Ridiculous <u>Allegro</u>	108
<u>Vivace</u>	120
<u>Largo</u>	44
<u>Allegretto</u>	84
Christmas Chimes	$\text{♩} = 116$
General William Booth <u>Allegro moderato</u> ("courthouse door")	60 $\text{♩} = 50$
<u>Down Bye Street</u>	
1. Down Bye Street <u>Allegro</u>	84
<u>Andante</u>	54
2. Widow's Prayer	60
3. Widow's Song <u>Allegro</u>	$\text{♩} = 72$
<u>Andante</u>	60
Everlasting Mercy <u>Con moto</u>	88
<u>Andante</u>	56
at $3/2$	$\text{♩} = 56$
("O Christ who holds")	60
Lay of the Laborer <u>Meno mosso</u>	100 66
<u>Songs from Mother Goose</u>	
1. Pease-Pudding <u>Allegro maestoso</u>	80
2. Hey Diddle Diddle <u>Vivace</u>	116
3. Little Jack Horner <u>Andante con moto</u>	60
4. Little Miss Muffet <u>Andante con moto</u>	60
5. There Was a Crooked Man <u>Allegretto</u>	80
6. Little Polly Flinders <u>Lento</u>	60
7. Barber, Barber, Shave a Pig <u>Allegro</u>	104

8. Little Boy Blue	
<u>Andante</u>	60
9. Ding Dong Bell	
<u>Allegro moderato</u>	66
10. Pussy Cat	
<u>Lento</u>	44
11. Old King Cole	
<u>Allegro</u>	96
12. Tommy Snooks	
<u>Andante</u>	69
13. Rock-a-bye Baby	
<u>Andante</u>	46
14. I Had a Little Husband	
<u>Allegro</u>	126
15. The Queen of Hearts	
<u>Lento</u>	46
16. Solomon Grundy	
<u>Energico</u>	92
17. The House that Jack Built	
<u>Allegro</u>	126
18. Mistress Mary	
<u>Andante</u>	66
19. Hickory, Dickory	
<u>Allegro</u>	112
20. There Was a Little Man	
<u>Allegretto</u>	60
21. Dance to your Daddy	
<u>Andante</u>	54
22. See-Saw Sacradown	
<u>Grazioso</u>	60
23. Little Willie Winkle	
<u>Allegretto</u>	66
24. Simple Simon	
<u>Allegretto</u>	60
25. I Went Up One Pair of Stairs	63
26. To Market	
<u>Con moto</u>	72
27. One Misty, Moisty Morning	
<u>Andante</u>	60
28. Humpty-Dumpty	
<u>Allegro grazioso</u>	88
29. I Love Sixpence	
<u>Vivace</u>	80
30. If All the World Were Apple Pie	
<u>Allegro</u>	80
31. Old Father Greybeard	
<u>Adagio</u>	48
32. The North Wind Doth Blow	
<u>Andante</u>	80
33. Baa-baa, Black Sheep	
<u>Andante con moto</u>	69

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|--------------------------------|-----|
| 34. Margaret Wrote a Letter | |
| <u>Allegro</u> <u>grazioso</u> | 80 |
| 35. Poor Dog Bright | |
| <u>Allegro</u> | 116 |

Unpublished Songs

Three Songs from Songs of the Slums

- | | |
|-------------------------|-----|
| 1. Snowy Morning | |
| <u>Adagio</u> | 52 |
| 2. <u>Little Sister</u> | |
| <u>Andante con moto</u> | 76 |
| 3. <u>Spring Night</u> | |
| <u>Allegro</u> | 112 |
| <u>Poco moderato</u> | 92 |